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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

MOVING FORWARD BY LOOKING IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR

by

Jacob Mathews

June 2016

Thesis Advisor: Hy Rothstein
Second Reader: Ian Rice

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The U.S. military remains a premier conventional fighting force, but success in counterinsurgency has proved to be beyond its grasp on numerous occasions. Consequently, this research investigates preconditions that could increase the likelihood of success for a U.S.-supported counterinsurgency. The selected factors include the host government's level of legitimacy, its capacity and willingness to deny sanctuary, and whether it shares key objectives with the United States. In all four cases of this comparative analysis, the United States functioned as the external supporter to the counterinsurgency forces. The cases include conflicts in the Philippines (2002–2014), El Salvador (1981–1992), Afghanistan (2001–2009), and Iraq (2003–2006). In the cases of the Philippines and El Salvador, both governments demonstrated a degree of legitimacy, the capacity and willingness to deny sanctuary, and shared critical objectives with the United States. In the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, both governments were relatively illegitimate and lacked the willingness and capacity to deny sanctuary. Moreover, while the host governments shared some objectives with the United States, the local populations did not embrace these ideals. Arguably, the Philippine and El Salvador cases reached acceptable outcomes, while the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have not. Therefore, this thesis recommends that the United States should not commit significant military support unless all three pre-conditions are satisfied.

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MOVING FORWARD BY LOOKING IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

The U.S. military remains a premier conventional fighting force, but success in counterinsurgency has proved to be beyond its grasp on numerous occasions. Consequently, this research investigates preconditions that could increase the likelihood of success for a U.S.-supported counterinsurgency. The selected factors include the host government's level of legitimacy, its capacity and willingness to deny sanctuary, and whether it shares key objectives with the United States. In all four cases of this comparative analysis, the United States functioned as the external supporter to the counterinsurgency forces. The cases include conflicts in the Philippines (2002–2014), El Salvador (1981–1992), Afghanistan (2001–2009), and Iraq (2003–2006). In the cases of the Philippines and El Salvador, both governments demonstrated a degree of legitimacy, the capacity and willingness to deny sanctuary, and shared critical objectives with the United States. In the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, both governments were relatively illegitimate and lacked the willingness and capacity to deny sanctuary. Moreover, while the host governments shared some objectives with the United States, the local populations did not embrace these ideals. Arguably, the Philippine and El Salvador cases reached acceptable outcomes, while the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have not. Therefore, this thesis recommends that the United States should not commit significant military support unless all three pre-conditions are satisfied.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFP	armed forces of the Philippines
ANA	Afghan national army
ANP	Afghan national police
ARENA	Alianza Republicana Nacionalista
ASF	Afghan security force
SF	Special Forces
ASG	Abu Sayyaf group
AQ	Al Qaeda
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
COIN	counterinsurgency
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CT	counterterrorism
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
ESAF	armed forces of El Salvador
FMLN	Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front
FATA	federally administered tribal area
GIRoA	government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GOI	government of Iraq
GRP	government of the Republic of the Philippines
IA	Iraqi army
ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
LOO	lines of operation
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
N2K	Nangahar, Nuristan and Khunar
NCP	national campaign plan
NPA	New People’s Army

OEF-P	Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines
PDC	Christian Democratic Party
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
SOF	special-operation forces
TB	Taliban
UAE	United Arab Emirates
U.S.	United States
USG	United States government
USSF	United States Special Forces
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

I. INTRODUCTION

Would the United States avoid entering into an irregular-warfare conflict knowing that a desirable outcome was unachievable? The aim of this research is to determine if certain critical preconditions in contemporary counterinsurgency conflicts preclude a satisfactory outcome. The ability to recognize and understand such preconditions should assist the United States in determining whether or not to support future counterinsurgency efforts.

The current global threat environment makes this inquiry relevant for the foreseeable future.[1] As senior civilian and military leaders acknowledge that conventional military superiority does not guarantee victory in irregular warfare, an analysis of the factors that tend to bring desired outcomes becomes critical. Rational states avoid involving themselves in conflicts where success is unobtainable. Therefore, they must recognize that there are certain circumstances, regardless of strategy, that make success highly improbable.

This research studies recent cases in which the United States participated directly or indirectly in counterinsurgency actions. The cases are El Salvador (1981–1992), the Philippines (2002–2014), Afghanistan (2001–2009), and Iraq (2003–2006). U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in the Philippines[2] and El Salvador, both of which were characterized by a limited employment of Army Special Forces,[3] are generally assessed by military analysts as having reached successful outcomes. By contrast, U.S. actions in

1 Seth G. Jones, *The Future of Irregular Warfare* (testimony, Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities for the United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC, March 27, 2012). 1–2.

2 Geoffrey Lambert, Larry Lewis, and Sarah Sewall, "Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines: Civilian Harm and the Indirect Approach," *Prism 3*, no. 4 (September 2012): 132; Stephen Watts, Jason H. Campbell, Patrick B. Johnson, Sameer Lalwani, and Sarah H. Bana, *Countering Others' Insurgencies: Understanding U.S. Small Footprint Interventions in Local Context* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2014), 63; Brian M Burton, "The Promise and Peril of the Indirect Approach," *Prism 3*, no. 1 (December 2011): 50.

3 Max Boot and Richard Bennett, "Treading Softly in the Philippines," *Weekly Standard* 14, no.16 (January 2009): 22–28; David S. Maxwell, "Partnership, Respect Guide U.S. Military Role in Philippines." *World Politics Review* (February 2013): 4, http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12685/partnership-respect-guide-u-s-military-role-in-philippines.

Iraq failed to achieve desired results by the end of 2006, and the conflict in Afghanistan offers little hope for a successful conclusion unless significant policy adjustments are made.[4] Both cases included a large military response in which Army Special Forces played a supporting role.

Former advisor to the National Security Council, Edward Luttwak, suggest that the United States is largely unable to succeed in counterinsurgency, observing that the United States will always play to its strength—that is, its ability to overwhelm the enemy with massing forces and firepower.[5] Experience shows that insurgents and counterinsurgents are in a battle for popular support—a battle the U.S. understands, but cannot seem to win. Moreover, large military responses may alienate a population, as opposed to building support.[6]

A. RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the pre-conditions that increase the likelihood of success for a U.S.-supported counterinsurgency?

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Drawing on general principles found in the literature on irregular warfare and counterinsurgency, this research identifies five preconditions for success in combating insurgency and evaluates their relative importance. A more extensive review of counterinsurgency literature that identified the preconditions is contained in the Appendix.

C. PRECONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Given the trend to increasing U.S. support of insurgency-wracked countries, it is essential that the preconditions that strongly shape outcomes be understood. In the 20th

4 Hy Rothstein and John Arquilla, *Afghan Endgames: Strategy and Policy Choices for America's Longest War* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 211–212.

5 Edward N. Luttwak, "Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice," *Harper's Magazine* 2 (2007): 41–42.

6 Hy Rothstein, "Less is More: The Problematic Future of Irregular Warfare in an Era of Collapsing States," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (February 2007): 275–294.

century, the U.S. view of intervention was predominantly shaped by Cold War considerations—namely, was it in our vital interests to prevent a country from falling to communist insurgents? Beyond this primary consideration, the nature of the host regime and insurgents, the geostrategic significance of the state and its relationship with the U.S., and the human cost of the insurgency affected the decision to support an action.[7] While these factors remain relevant, key preconditions that may predict the potential for success also warrant analysis. By distilling these preconditions from the literature, this research offers a deeper understanding of the variables to consider in supporting a counterinsurgency.

D. THE FIVE IDENTIFIED PRECONDITIONS

This research is focused on pre-cursors to strategy—more specifically five preconditions for success. Ultimately, three are suggested as critical for a U.S. counterinsurgency effort.

1. Legitimacy

Governmental legitimacy is discussed extensively in the literature and is generally recognized as a critical component in any counterinsurgency effort.[8] Legitimacy is derived from a population's support of and regard for the government in response to its ability to meet basic subsistence needs, administer justice, and provide security. It must be stressed that the U.S. cannot create legitimacy for a government affected by insurgency.[9]

In *The Strategic Lessons Unlearned from Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan: Why the Afghan National Security Forces Will Not Hold, and the Implications for the U.S.*

7 Raymond A. Millen and Steven Metz, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response* (Collingdale, PA: Diane Publishing, 2004), 18–19.

8 David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010); Hy Rothstein and John Arquilla, "Understanding the Afghan Challenge," in *Afghan Endgames Strategy and Policy Choices for America's Longest War,* eds. John Arquilla and Hy Rothstein (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012); John A. Nagl, James F. Amos, Sarah Sewall, and David Petraeus, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

9 Robert Reilly, "Shaping Strategic Communication," in *Afghan Endgames,* eds. John Arquilla and Hy Rothstein (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 169–170.

Army in Afghanistan, Chris Mason borrows Max Weber's definition of legitimacy as traditional, charismatic, or rational legal. Traditional legitimacy refers to the respect afforded to traditional authorities, including tribal leaders such as those found in southwest Asia and the Middle East.[10] Charismatic legitimacy is linked to a specific person or ideology, often a religious leader. Rational legal legitimacy derives from a government's adherence to institutionally enforced laws and regulations that are accepted by the people; this is the legitimacy that democratic governments enjoy.[11] To understand the sources of legitimacy in a potential host country, cultural and historical analysis is required. For example, in *Afghan Endgames: Strategy and Policy Choices for America's Longest War,* Arquilla and Rothstein use Afghanistan to explain that elections and democracy, although seemingly legitimate from a Western perspective, do not necessarily coincide with how legitimacy is perceived in Afghanistan.[12]

A government's legitimacy is evaluated in relative terms; because many variables contribute to or detract from legitimacy, a government is rarely considered absolutely legitimate or illegitimate. In the context of a counterinsurgency, it is likely that the government is either the root problem or suffers from low popular perception of legitimacy. In the vast majority of modern prescriptive counterinsurgency strategy literature, the population is viewed as a primary focus of the counterinsurgency effort.[13] The population's monopoly on the provision of legitimacy serves as a significant rationale for pursuing a population- centric strategy.

A government that is considered illegitimate will rarely, if ever, gain the public support necessary to end an insurgency, and adding U.S. support to an illegitimate regime may generate resentment among otherwise neutral population groups. If the government achieved legitimacy in a culturally acceptable fashion, but is struggling to provide value

10 M. Chris Mason, *The Strategic Lessons Unlearned from Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan: Why the Afghan National Security Forces Will Not Hold, and the Implications for the U.S. Army in Afghanistan* (Carlisle, PA: The Strategic Studies Institute, 2015), 140.

11 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,* 141.

12 Rothstein, Arquilla, "Understanding the Afghan Challenge," 8–9.

13 Nagl, et al., *U.S. Army/Marine Counterinsurgency Manual*; Kalev I. Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* (May–June 2005): 9.

and services to its population, external assistance and education may improve popular perception. As noted in the RAND study *How Insurgencies End*, by Connable and Libicki, "favorable endings are produced from well-timed, aggressive, fully resourced, population-centric campaigns that address the root cause of the insurgency."[14]

2. National Identity

Chris Mason asserts that nation-building is impossible for external supporters of host governments. Mason's definition of nation building deviates slightly from common usage by characterizing it as the process of developing a deep-seated sense of nationalism, referred to as "national identity," among the preponderance of the population.[15] Mason cites a lack of national interest to explain low motivation in Afghan security forces (ASF) necessary to counter the Taliban (TB) and asserts that while national identity is required for counterinsurgency success, it is insufficient. Mason's emphasis on national identity and its effect on governmental resolve ties directly with the RAND study, *Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies,* by Christopher Paul, which claims that all successful counterinsurgent governments demonstrate a high level of commitment and motivation, both by implementing reforms and pursuing insurgents.[16] Mason's point reinforces that government and security forces must share strong commitment to prevail over a committed insurgent.

Mason quotes the Tanzanian scholar Godfrey Mwakikagile:

> Tribalism is incompatible with nationalism, and nation building is impossible without nationhood. And you can't have nationhood without a genuine feeling of common citizenship and identity.[17]

Ultimately, asserts Mason, a country that lacks a national identity will fail to establish a government accepted as legitimate by the majority of the population, and

14 Ben Connable and Martin C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2013), 153.

15 Mason, "Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq," 147–155.

16 Christopher Paul, Colin Clarke, Beth Grill, and Molly Dunnigan, *Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2013), 182.

17 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,*148.

security forces will not risk their lives for an abstract cause that transcends tribal or local priorities. Mason uses South Vietnam and Iraq as examples of governments that failed due to lack of national identity and predicts that Afghanistan will suffer the same fate.

3. Capacity and Willingness to Deny Sanctuary and Associated Support

For this research, sanctuary includes the physical terrain, materials, social empathy, and direct support provided by a population in close proximity to an insurgent group. Sanctuary may be found within state boundaries or externally. Physical sanctuary exists where the location and geography provide either significant distance from security forces or restricted access. Social support within insurgent sanctuaries may be of three kinds: individuals may be supportive toward the group's aims; coerced sufficiently to permit insurgent functioning in the area; or largely neutral, which translates to passive support. The rural or urban nature of the environment shapes the degree to which each type of sanctuary is most significant.

In *How Insurgencies End*, Connable and Libicki analyze conditions that support an insurgency or bring about its conclusion, including the impact of duration and external factors such as sanctuary, outside intervention, and support for the government or insurgents. In the cases studied by Connable and Libicki, insurgents who lacked sanctuary were successful roughly 14% of the time, while insurgents with sanctuary were successful nearly 50% of the time.[18]

In his 2005 article, "Why the Strong Lose," Jeffrey Record reflects on the ideas of Arreguín-Toft, Andrew Mack, and Gill Merom to establish a baseline argument for why stronger forces lose in irregular conflicts. Arreguín-Toft argues that stronger powers should match the strategy of the guerrilla. Mack suggests that guerrillas are more committed, because the stakes are high for them personally. Merom posits that greater powers like the United States fail because of "sensitivities to casualties," "repugnance to brutality," and "commitment to democratic life."[19] In addition to concepts such as strategic interactions, superior will, and willingness to sacrifice, Record includes external

18 Connable, Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, 35.

19 Jeffrey Record, "Why the Strong Lose," *Parameters* 35, no.4 (Winter 2005–2006): 21.

support as a necessary but insufficient condition for insurgent victory.[20] Record affirms the insights of Arreguín-Toft, Mack, and Merom while adding that external insurgent support has the potential to alter the dynamics of a power relationship between two actors. For example, an insurgent who is initially weaker than the government may become stronger as a result of external support.[21]

Paul's study is an extensive review of historical counterinsurgencies that considers three variables critical in counterinsurgency success: "tangible support reduction"; "commitment and motivation"; and "flexibility and adaptability."[22] Although these variables are strategy-based, the first two may also be considered preconditions—is the host government able or willing to contest insurgency-owned spaces? Tangible support reduction as described by Paul includes disruption of sanctuary, material support, recruitment, funding, and intelligence, and directly pertains to the benefits of physical and social sanctuary. Commitment and motivation to fight an insurgency, the second variable, also serves as a precondition. Critics generally understand commitment and motivation as referring both to the affected government and its security forces. In evaluating this precondition, the United States must determine whether the affected government shares the same commitment to combatting the insurgency as the United States. The United States cannot desire victory more than the government in question.

Paul's recommendations for success from observations in his study include forcing insurgents to fight as guerrillas by maintaining a force advantage, focusing strategies on denying insurgent support to a greater degree than winning popular support, maintaining flexibility, a willingness to conduct multiple lines of operations, and refraining from overly harsh tactics. Further, in developing host-nation security forces, it is better to produce fewer quality soldiers than more poorly trained soldiers. Paul sees securing the commitment of partner governments and elites as useful and suggests it be done through reform measures and equitable incentives.[23] According to Paul's research,

20 Jeffrey Record, "Why the Strong Lose," *Parameters* 35, no.4 (Winter 2005–2006): 22.

21 Jeffrey Record, "Why the Strong Lose," *Parameters* 35, no.4 (Winter 2005–2006): 22.

22 Paul, et al., *Paths to Victory: Lessons Insurgencies,* 181–182.

23 Paul, et al., *Paths to Victory: Lessons Insurgencies,* xxxiv–xxxv.

minimizing insurgent support is closely correlated with counterinsurgent success, and denying sanctuary and material support in some cases is more important than gaining popular support.[24]

4. Political and Social Will

Another variable that strongly shapes outcomes for an affected government is the political and social will of external supporters. For the United States, political and social will is described as the willingness of the people and their elected representatives to advocate continued support for an overseas counterinsurgency effort. The nature of conflict, recent history, and scope of the conflict shapes its popularity. In addition to societal approval, congressional willingness to fund a potentially long campaign is also required. Studies suggest that once support is given, premature withdrawal of support has a detrimental effect.[25]

In his 1975 article "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars," Andrew Mack concludes that political and social will, or "internal dissent," is often responsible for the withdrawal of stronger powers from asymmetric conflicts. Mack concludes, "They have failed to realize that in every asymmetric conflict where the external power has been forced to withdraw, it has been as a consequence of internal dissent."[26] Particularly in the United States, it is important to consider the political and social will of the people before committing forces to a counterinsurgency.

Arreguín-Toft emphasizes the importance of political and social will in "How the Weak Win Wars," highlighting two central elements to consider in countering asymmetric threats. The first is to prepare American citizens for a long employment of forces and the second is to send troops who are trained to fight an insurgency.[27] The

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24 Paul, et al., *Paths to Victory: Lessons Insurgencies*, 182.

25 Edward G. Anderson, "A Dynamic Model of Counterinsurgency Policy Including the Effects of Intelligence, Public Security, Popular Support, and Insurgent Experience," *System Dynamics Review* 27, no. 2 (April/June 2011): 113.

26 Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics* 27, no. 2 (1975): 200.

27 Ivan Arreguín-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *International Security* 26, no.1 (Summer 2001): 123.

implication is that if the public does not support a long conflict, the military may be pressured to withdraw before an acceptable outcome is achieved.

5. Shared Political Objectives

It is critically important to evaluate whether key goals and objectives are held in common between the U.S. and potential host countries. It is not necessary, however, that both countries agree on all aspects of the situation. Analysts may evaluate alignment by assessing the character and biases of potential partners.[28] The character of government is described as its type— e.g., democratic, theocratic, or autocratic—and its compatibility with U.S. moral and ethical expectations. For example, supporting an abusive government or one that refuses to embrace reforms is unlikely to produce a favorable outcome. U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine emphasizes the importance of promoting legitimacy. If a government is focused on killing insurgents and unwilling to address root causes, desired outcomes are improbable.[29]

In *The Promise and Peril of the Indirect Approach,* Brian Burton identifies elements vital to indirect U.S. strategy. These include improving the host nation's governing capacity through reliably providing essential services, supporting leadership focused on the rule of law and equitable justice, acting to reduce corruption in the security forces and local governing organizations, and incorporating reforms to address economic and political grievances—all of which focus on a population-centric approach to counterinsurgency. Such an approach recognizes that legitimacy developed through positive actions may reduce support for the insurgency. Burton recommends considering whether a host country's behavior is conducive to countering an insurgency before providing security-force assistance.[30] In many cases, this precondition can become a secondary consideration, for fear of probable outcomes without U.S. assistance; but Burton asserts that if a host nation does not share critical goals and objectives, intervention is likely to fail. A government that seeks assistance but is unwilling to

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28 U.S. Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, 2009), 37–38.

29 Sepp, *"Best Practices in Counterinsurgency,"* 10.

30 Burton, *"Promise Peril the Indirect Approach,"* 58.

address corruption or enable reforms is a big part of the problem; such governments seldom prevail, even with assistance.[31]

David Kilcullen poses four considerations to use in deciding whether to support a counterinsurgency:

1. What kind of state are we trying to build or assist?
2. How compatible is the local government's character with our own?
3. What kinds of states have proven viable in the past, in this country and with this population?
4. What evidence is there that the kind of state we are trying to build will be viable?[32]

Kilcullen asserts that shared objectives are a key element in any decision to support a host nation and that the U.S. must establish realistic expectations as to what objectives are possible. Compatibility with the host government emerges as a common element of success in the reviewed literature. In this research, ideological compatibility is referred to as "shared political objectives."

E. THE THREE CRITICAL PRECONDITIONS

The literature suggests many factors that are relevant to the success of counterinsurgency operations, many of them strategy-based and internal to the conflict. The manner in which counterinsurgents choose to develop and implement a strategy greatly affects the outcome of the conflict. This research, however, focuses on the less frequently considered, but equally relevant, preconditions that may determine success or failure. Of the five identified in this research, three are considered critical in U.S. decision making.

1. Legitimacy

An illegitimate government is likely a significant factor in motivating an insurgency, and legitimacy can only be derived from the population it represents.[33]

31 Burton, "*Promise Peril the Indirect Approach,*" 58–59.

32 Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 12.

Nearly every piece of COIN literature reviewed validates legitimacy as a variable, either explicitly or implicitly.[34] While the United States may assist in improving legitimacy, it cannot create legitimacy where it does not exist. A host government must have adequate legitimacy in its foundations to succeed against an insurgency in the long term.

2. Capacity to Deny Sanctuary and Support

A host government's capacity to deny sanctuary and disrupt external support is also crucial. Sanctuary facilitates logistical support, allows insurgents to avoid pressure, and enables preparations for future actions. When the insurgent's survival is at risk, sanctuary provides time and space to regroup.[35] Both Paul's and Connable's respective RAND studies along with Jeffrey Record cite the critical nature of sanctuary and the necessity of degrading tangible support for the enemy.[36] Furthermore, the host government should demonstrate an ability to deny sanctuary before the arrival of U.S. support. When appropriate tactics are used, actions by indigenous forces are less likely than actions by occupiers to provoke a backlash from the population.[37] Beyond the material requirements needed to deny physical sanctuary, denying social sanctuary is also critical, and entails practical demonstrations of regard for the population. If the host government is unwilling to address grievances, populations may become sympathetic to the insurgency and refuse to supply the intelligence needed for discriminant operations.

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33 Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath, and John Nagl, "Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* 86 no.2 (March–April 2006); Kilcullen, "Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency."

34 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,*; Rothstein, Arquilla, *Afghan Endgames: Strategy and Policy,*; Burton, *Promise Peril the Indirect Approach,; Kilcullen, Counterinsurgency,*; Sepp, *Best Practices in Counterinsurgency*.

35 Joseph D. Celeski, "Attacking Insurgent Space: Sanctuary Denial and Border Interdiction," *Military Review* 86, no.6 (November–December 2006): 51–52.

36 Paul, et al., *Paths to Victory: Lessons Insurgencies*,182; Record, *Why the Strong Lose*, 22; Connable, Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, 34–35.

37 U.S. Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, U.S. *Government Counterinsurgency Guide*, 39.

3. Shared Political Objectives

Unity of effort is required between a host country and an external supporter to counter a committed insurgent. Stability and security are unlikely to prevail if the support given to a host government is conditional on objectives that run counter to the host country's political traditions. Reasonable shared objectives empower the host government to use indigenous approaches in fighting an insurgency. Although not always referred to as "shared political objectives," the imperative of compatible goals among partnering governments is commonly referenced.[38]

4. Preconditions Not Considered Essential to U.S. Success

Of the five preconditions reviewed in this research, two are suggested to be less significant: political and social will and national identity. American political and social will is most critical in larger-scale engagements. While it is unclear whether the United States is capable of projecting a minimal footprint, the literature suggests that smaller-scale responses are more likely to be supported by Americans.[39] The factor of national identity, a significant component in Afghanistan and Iraq, reached critical importance in these theaters because of exacerbating factors—a legitimacy crisis, unresponsive governance, and strategic miscalculations. When an inappropriate strategy is implemented, the challenges associated with national identity increase. Therefore, when the United States applies an appropriate strategy the precondition of national identity becomes less determinate. In countries with many different identities, empowering local leadership and security forces has the potential to bring stability and ease discontent.

F. HYPOTHESIS

The literature devotes extensive attention to counterinsurgency strategies while overlooking significant variables that strongly predict conflict outcomes. This research identifies five preconditions and suggests that three are necessary (but not sufficient) to defeat a capable and committed insurgency:

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38 Rothstein, Arquilla, "Understanding the Afghan Challenge," 7–11; Burton, *Promise Peril the Indirect Approach*, 58; Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 12.

39 Rothstein, "Less is More: Problematic Future," 276.

1. The host government must be legitimate.

2. The host government must have the capacity and willingness to deny sanctuary and associated support.

3. The host government must demonstrate shared political objectives with the United States.

G. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The method of research will be a comparative analysis of four U.S. cases from 1980 to the present. This analysis will focus on the relevance of the three selected preconditions on the outcomes of the cases. The cases are evaluated from the viewpoint of a prospective external supporter of a counterinsurgency.

The cases of El Salvador and the Philippines were selected as examples of successful interventions.[40] El Salvador faced a communist insurgency intent on overthrowing the existing government, while the Philippines faced Islamic extremists intent on establishing a separate autonomous government. In the Afghan and Iraqi cases, both countries had new governments and security forces that required significant support; neither is deemed a success. The transitions from interstate conflict to insurgency in these cases provide excellent test cases for the preconditions identified. Despite not being precursors to U.S. support in Iraq and Afghanistan, the variables are important when the United States considers staying and countering the insurgency. Comparing these four cases reveals the correlation of preconditions and outcomes.

[40] Burton, *"Promise Peril the Indirect Approach,"* 50; Rothstein, *Less is More: Problematic Future,* 280.

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II. CASE 1: THE PHILIPPINES

From 2002–2014, during Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines (OEF–P), the United States supported the Philippine government's efforts to suppress the Islamic based Moro insurgency. The Philippine case study is designed to provide context to the factors that led to the insurgency. The pre-existing conditions of legitimacy, denial of sanctuary and shared political objectives are evaluated in relation to their impact on the outcome of the case.

The history of the Muslim populations in the Philippines is one of repression through colonization and a lack of political representation. Missionaries first introduced Islam to the Philippines in the late thirteenth century. At that time, the Muslim populations shared a degree of social and political unity unlike that of other groups in the Philippines. As a result, many owned property and items of value. However, in the sixteenth century, the Spanish colonized the islands and set out to eradicate Islam by forcibly converting Muslims to Christianity. The Spanish rule and repressive actions lasted until the conclusion of the Spanish American War. With the United States as the new colonial power, transfer of land ownership to Catholic elites and political changes followed. The loss of land ownership during both Spanish and American colonization signified the loss of Muslims' right to self-governance.[41]

The 1940s served as a period of both hardship and hope for the Philippines. In late 1941, the Japanese seized control of the territory, a reality that remained until 1945 when Douglas MacArthur liberated the Philippines. As a holdover from the Japanese occupation, communist resistance groups exist in the Philippines today. Of those groups, the New People's Army (NPA) continues to pose a threat to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP).[42]

Despite the Philippines gaining independence in 1946, the Moro populations' poor quality of life remained largely unchanged. A history of repression, lack of

41 Adam Hudson, "U.S. Wages "War on Terror" in the Philippines," *Truth-out.org.* accessed December 9, 2015, http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/30061-us-wages-war-on-terror-in-the-philippines.

42 Watts et al., *Countering Others Insurgencies,* 66–67.

representation, and extreme poverty led these populations to revolt. As a result, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Al Qaeda-affiliated Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) were formed to affect change. The ASG, the MILF and the Indonesian based Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) resorted to acts of terror, which included kidnapping and ransoming students and tourists to fund operations. "U.S. interests were piqued shortly before 9/11 when the ASG kidnapped several U.S. citizens and held them hostage on Basilan."[43] In late 2000, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo requested U.S. assistance to counter the growing Islamic insurgency.[44]

1. Philippine Government Legitimacy

To evaluate GRP legitimacy it is necessary to understand what factors contribute to legitimacy in Philippine culture. The GRP's transition from an autocracy to democracy in 1986 serves as not only a significant movement toward legitimacy, but also sets a precedent for future self-determination. In this context, actions taken by the government to further improve representation would be perceived as legitimizing actions. Additionally, security forces that further subordinated themselves to civilian control and that reduced collateral damage and human rights violations would increase the perception of legitimacy. Beyond reforms to the security forces, the reduction of nepotism and corruption in politics would raise the population's view of the government. Infrastructure development in the poorer underdeveloped regions would also improve legitimacy. Because the Philippines have historically experienced significant government corruption the population would tolerate minimal levels of corruption as normal while still viewing the GRP as legitimate.[45]

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43 Gregory Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and the Indirect Approach," *Military Review* 86, no. 6 (November–December 2006): 4.

44 Adam Hudson, "U.S. Wages "War on Terror" in the Philippines," *Truth-out.org.* accessed December 9, 2015, http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/30061-us-wages-war-on-terror-in-the-philippines; Lambert, et al., "Operation Enduring Freedom Philippines," 120; Watts et al., *Countering Others Insurgencies*, 69–72.

45 Noel M. Morada, "Political Legitimacy in an Unconsolidated Democratic Order: The Philippines," in *Political Legitimacy in Asia*, eds. John Kane, Heu Chieh Loy, and Haig Patapan (New York: Springer, 2011), 200.

Prior to U.S. involvement in 2002, the GRP had transitioned from an autocratic institution with significant corruption, criminality and nepotism to a functioning democracy still in need of political and military reforms. In dealing with the Islamic insurgency, it was common practice for the AFP to sweep through an area engaging both civilians and insurgents alike. Heavy damage to property and high civilian casualties contributed significantly to the populations disdain for the AFP and the GRP as a whole.[46] Historically, the Philippine, president's demeanor shaped the strategy to deal with dissidents and unrest. For instance, President Marcos (1965-1986) relied more heavily on military force, which included martial law, than socio-economic measures directed at the root cause of the unrest. Maria Corazon Aquino (1986-1992) enacted numerous reforms in the newly established democracy as a combined approach to address the discontent.[47] At different times during the 1980s and 1990s, agreements were reached with the MNLF for increased autonomy and what equated to concessions for Muslim populations. In 1989, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao was created for districts in Mindanao. In 1991, the historically centralized GRP passed legislation that decentralized the government's control to the local level. This legislation provided latitude and autonomy for locals to select leadership who represented their interests.[48] By the mid-1990s, agreements between the GRP and the MNLF made provisions for former fighters to establish government provided farms and to integrate into the AFP.[49]

Despite these different initiatives intended to pacify the Islamic dissidents, the more radical elements of the MILF and the ASG continued to rely on violence to pursue an Islamic State in the southern Philippines. For those elements, anything less than the establishment of an Islamic State was insufficient. As a result, the sophistication and fervor of their efforts increased following the end of the Soviet occupation of

46 Lambert, et al., "Operation Enduring Freedom Philippines," 122.

47 Watts et al., *Countering Others Insurgencies,* 74.

48 Perla E. Legaspi, "The Changing Role of Local Government Under a Decentralized State: The Case of the Philippines," *Public Management Review* 3, no. 1 (March 2001): 131.

49 Lambert, et al., "Operation Enduring Freedom Philippines," 118–119.

Afghanistan in 1989. Islamic fighters who had supported the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan were returning to their homes in Indonesia and the Philippines.[50]

Although imperfect, the GRP has trended more toward an increased level of legitimacy. As part of this trend, the power brokers within the military ceded greater control and oversight to civilian leaders within the government. Through reforms, the GRP progressively moved toward inclusion of minority groups and the employment of military tactics that emphasize care for civilians through better target discrimination. It is likely that Muslim populations will continue to feel a degree of political isolation; only 5% of the population is Muslim in an almost entirely Catholic country (83%).[51] Despite moderate levels of corruption, the majority of the Philippine's citizens remain committed to democracy and affords a degree of legitimacy to their government.[52]

2. Capacity to Deny Sanctuary and Support

A host country's capacity and commitment to denying insurgent sanctuary is a strong predictor of success in counterinsurgency operations. Denying sanctuary, like legitimacy, should be measured in relative terms. It is not realistic to think the counterinsurgent will be able to deny all sanctuary; if that were the case, the insurgency would not likely have the time and space to materialize. Rather, denying sanctuary refers to denying much of the sanctuary available to the insurgents and the social and material support inherent in that sanctuary.[53]

Sanctuary used by the ASG and the MILF is a function of rugged topography and Muslim demographic concentrations in the southern Philippines. The "Philippines consist of over 7100 islands surrounded by the Philippine Sea to the east and the South China Sea to the west."[54] On the southern islands, which have the greatest concentrations of

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50 Wilson, *Anatomy Successful COIN Operation*, 4–5.

51 Central Intelligence Agency, "CIA World Factbook," *www.cia.gov*, accessed January 29, 2016, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html.

52 Morada, "Political Legitimacy in Unconsolidated Order," 211.

53 Record, "Why the Strong Lose," 22.

54 C.H. Briscoe, "Rugged Terrain Makes Philippine Islands Haven for Insurgent Groups," *Special Warfare* 17, no.1 (September 2004): 15.

Muslim citizens, the terrain is extremely rugged inland, with the majority of people living along the coastal areas near the cities.[55] Although there are Muslims in Manila and southern Mindanao, the MILF and the ASG have historically relied on the islands south of Mindanao along the Sulu Archipelago for sanctuary. These areas are difficult for GRP security forces to reach undetected. Additionally, the population within these sanctuaries has traditionally sympathized with the insurgent cause—an environment that made intelligence collection difficult for GRP security forces.

Abu Sayyaf Group and MILF sanctuaries were largely internal to the Philippines, allowing these groups to leverage these areas for much-needed financial and material support from AQ and JI. During the 1980s, the future ASG leader Abdurajak Janjalani developed relationships with both AQ and JI while fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan. Along with Janjalani, Philippine based fighters sharpened their knowledge of tactics and guerrilla fighting skills. In addition to skills, the relationships that developed fighting alongside AQ and JI members earned them future financial and material support in fighting their own insurgency.[56]

Following the rise in violence in the early 1990s, the GRP escalated its counterinsurgency efforts against the ASG. At this time, the AFP retained the character of the military under the autocratic Marcos regime.[57] As a result, the methods used to counter terrorist activities were harsh. Many of the AFP's early efforts were directed at leadership targeting. Raids often relied on poor intelligence, used indiscriminate fires, and were compromised. Despite these challenges, the AFP did find success in degrading the Islamic insurgency. In 1998, the AFP killed ASG leader Abdurajak Janjalani. His death disrupted the ASG's organizational structure and support gained from his personal relationships with both AQ and JI. Moreover, following the world trade center bombings in 1993, travel restrictions were placed on key AQ financiers by the GRP that effectively cut AQ support to the ASG. The killing of Abdurajak Janjalani and subsequent reduction

55 Briscoe, "Rugged Terrain Philippine Islands Haven," 15.

56 Zach Fellman, *Abu Sayyaf Group* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011), 2–3.

57 Watts et al., *Countering Others Insurgencies*, 74–75.

in support severely disrupted the ASG. The leadership vacuum split the ASG into factions, one based in Basilan and the other in Sulu. Without critical support, the ASG resorted to kidnapping for ransom to fund operations.[58]

Prior to U.S. support in 2002, the GRP demonstrated the basic capacity and willingness to disrupt insurgent sanctuary and the support associated with it. However, AFP intelligence collecting was limited. As a result, many operations relied on wide sweeping offensives that were abusive toward the population. The GRP did conduct counter terrorism operations into many of the deepest Moro sanctuaries; however, most operations were short-term events that failed to improve the security environment where they were conducted. Moreover, during that period, AFP operations ultimately did more to foster ASG/MILF support as a result of their indiscriminate tactics.[59]

3. Philippine Political Objectives

The GRP's objectives revolved primarily around the development of internal security and stability. The GRP sought to improve the AFP's capacity to conduct both counter terror and counterinsurgency operations. U.S. trainers were seen as the means to reach that end.[60] Further, Philippine leaders understood that U.S. support brought access to funding and technology, as well as the opportunity for increased legitimacy through security force improvements and messaging campaigns. One of the GRP's greater goals was to leverage U.S. support against all internal threats. In response to numerous internal attacks, the GRP sought to degrade both the communist NPA and the Islamic ASG. Of the two organizations, the NPA represented the greater threat to the GRP's sovereignty and stability.[61] Naturally, the NPA represented a more pressing problem to the GRP than the ASG. Although capable of significant attacks, the ASG remained isolated to the southern Philippines. As an additional objective, the GRP sought to develop agreements

58 Zach Fellman, *Abu Sayyaf Group* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011), 2.

59 Watts et al., *Countering Others Insurgencies*, 78–86.

60 Lambert, et al., "Operation Enduring Freedom Philippines," 121.

61 Watts, et al., *Countering Others Insurgencies*, 102–103.

with more moderate Muslim organizations through reforms, as opposed to targeted military actions.

Although the United States and the Philippines shared numerous objectives, they also experienced some friction in areas where their goals were not shared. Initially, one of the more significant differences arose when it became clear that Philippine law required governmental approval to allow U.S. forces to conduct unilateral operations. When the Philippine government did not approve, the United States had to employ an indirect approach. Additionally, U.S. support was specifically directed at dismantling the Islamic threats and not the communist NPA.[62] Although it was recognized that improving the AFP's capacity enhanced their ability to counter the NPA was key, direct intelligence and technical support to those operations was withheld. This distinction between which types of operations would be supported served as a point of contention between the two countries.[63] In regards to the MILF, the GRP was intent on conducting negotiations and reforms as a way to pacify any threat posed by the organization. Conversely, the United States was intent on labeling the MILF as a terrorist organization because of its ties to the ASG. Despite the MILF's provision of sanctuary and support to ASG and JI, the GRP refused to directly target the MILF to prevent any escalation in violence or disruption of ongoing resolutions.[64]

4. Shared Political Objectives

At the request of the Philippine president, the United States government agreed to support the GRP in countering its Islamic insurgency. The decision was followed closely by AQs' attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. In the wake of the attack, intelligence made it clear that several key figures within AQ had received operational support in the Philippines. Moreover, sanctuaries in the southern Philippines had been used to raise funds and serve as a staging area for operations. For the United States, the Philippines represented the front line for combating Islamic terrorism in Southeast

62 Burton, "Promise Peril the Indirect Approach," 53.

63 Watts et al., *Countering Others Insurgencies*, 107.

64 Watts et al., *Countering Others Insurgencies*, 105–106.

Asia.[65] Following the decision to support the GRP, both governments signed a bilateral security assistance agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the support.

The United States' objectives in the Philippines were focused on countering the Islamic extremist threat to prevent future attacks against the United States. To achieve this objective, three lines of operation (LOO) were devised: "building partner force capacity, improving civil military relations, and informing the populous to highlight the development projects and professionalism demonstrated by the AFP and the GRP."[66] Despite U.S. forces being restricted to advising and assisting the AFP, they still accomplished their objective of severely degrading Islamic terrorism in the Philippines.[67]

Beginning in 2002, U.S. support focused on enhancing the CT and COIN capacity of the AFP. This step was designed to not only improve relations with disaffected populations through a reduction in collateral damage, but also to increase the intelligence collection in the Moro communities. Prior to U.S. involvement, the AFP's focus was sanctuary disruption through brute force; after U.S. involvement, it shifted to sanctuary denial through specific military action, which involved co-opting social sanctuary through development and reform measures directed at the root of the discontent. As a result of increased counterinsurgency pressure in areas of traditional ASG sanctuary, the AFP, with U.S. support, killed Khadaffy Janjalani and Abu Sulaiman. The ASG's subsequent inability to maintain its ties to both the MILF and JI severely degraded its organizational structure and offensive capability.[68]

During OEF-P, the United States and the GRP shared numerous objectives. Both parties believed that the development of the Philippine military and civilian capacity was a critical component to dismantling Islamic dissident organizations. Additionally, both understood that reforms designed to enhance the legitimacy of the security forces and the government were key to the COIN strategy. Legitimacy was reinforced by greater target

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65 Watts et al., *Countering Others Insurgencies,* 102–103.

66 Burton, "Promise and Peril the Indirect Approach," 51; Wilson "Anatomy Successful COIN Operation OEF," 6.

67 Watts et al., *Countering Others Insurgencies,* 63.

68 Fellman, *Abu Sayyaf Group,* 6.

discrimination in CT efforts and reductions in collateral damage from AFP operations. Following security improvements, targeted development projects enhanced intelligence collection and served to deny sanctuary to the enemy. These developments demonstrated a shared population centric approach to countering the Islamic insurgency.

When analyzing the Philippine case in respect to shared objectives, it is important to recognize that the level of similarity be viewed in relative terms and that the objectives that were shared were critical ones. In this case, the U.S. government and the GRP shared the objectives of improving the capacity of the AFP to conduct population centric counterinsurgency and counter terrorist operations, incorporating civilian organizations for development projects and enabling reforms within the government and military to reduce corruption and build increased legitimacy. Although not completely destroyed, ASG numbers are now at a manageable level. Analysts suggest that the ASG is more focused on survival at this point; with limited external support from JI, its ability to export violence against the United States is limited.[69] Although there were differing objectives in some areas, the United States shared enough objectives with the GRP to accomplish its stated goals in the Philippines.

69 Fellman, *Abu Sayyaf Group*, 6–7.

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III. CASE 2: EL SALVADOR

When the five factions of the communist insurgency in El Salvador unified against the government under the name Farabundi Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in 1980, the United States was unwilling to allow another Central American country to fall to communism. The El Salvador case provides context to the insurgency and the United States' role in these events. The pre-existing conditions of legitimacy, denial of sanctuary, and shared political objectives are evaluated in relation to their impact on the case.[70]

Salvadorians' discontent traces its roots back to Spanish Colonization 1839, a period in Salvadorian history responsible for creating the great divide between the rich land owning elites and the poor. Furthermore, the military, predominantly controlled by the elites, brutally suppressed attempts at reform and efforts toward achieving political representation for the working class. The 1932 peasant uprising, *la Matanza*, serves as an example of that reality, with a death toll close to 40,000 people.[71]

Despite some progress in the growth of a middle class, the discontent of the average citizen continued into the 1960s and 1970s. The limited growth experienced at that time was the result of urban development, which created opportunities beyond the traditional agricultural sphere. Growth in the industrial sector and access to education and technology spurred the working class to organize and achieve political representation. The Christian Democrat Party (PDC), founded in 1960, served as the initial platform to seek this government representation. In the 1977 election, the incumbent government fraudulently placed its candidate into office. The failure of the democratic process to bring about political change drove many toward violence and the pursuit of Marxist ideals. Marxists often seek freedom from military dictatorship, adhere to a liberation

70 Angel Rabasa, Peter Chalk, Audra K. Grant, K. Schoot McMahon, Stephanie Pezard, Caroline Reilly, David Ucko, and S. Rebecca Zimmerman, *From Insurgency to Stability, Vol 2: Insights from Selected Case Studies* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2011), 77.

71 Rabasa, et al., *From Insurgency to Stability*,76–77; Alberto M. Alvarez, *From Revolutionary War to Democratic Revolution* (Berlin, Germany: Berghof Conflict Research, 2010), 9.

theology, express dissatisfaction with the land-owning elites, and pursue opportunities for the middle class.[72]

Following the Sandinista revolution in neighboring Nicaragua (1979), dissidents in El Salvador began turning toward violence as the primary vehicle for change. Recognizing conditions rife for revolution, Cuban President Fidel Castro unified and supported the newly formed FMLN. Despite increased attacks and an all-out offensive in early 1981, the Armed Forces El Salvador (ESAF) was able to prevent the overthrow of the government. However, the large-scale offensive by the FMLN demonstrated to the United States that both economic and military aid was necessary to prevent another Central American country from falling to communism.[73]

1. Salvadorian Government Legitimacy

To evaluate Salvadorian legitimacy, it is necessary to understand how and from whom legitimacy is derived in that culture. In all cases, a government's level of legitimacy is directly tied to its population. A government gains popular support by providing the population with its basic needs. Beyond the provision of basic needs, culture determines if an autocratic or democratic government is acceptable and derives its authority legitimately. Within this accepted governance structure, the implementation of laws and justice also contribute significantly to establishing a government's authority. Historically, El Salvador was familiar with governance that represented the concerns of the land-owning elites. The poorer majority felt slighted by their government; however, they had no recourse except violence to affect change. In this context, a government willing to conduct reforms in the areas of land ownership, political representation, and military accountability would be perceived as legitimate in the eyes of Salvadorian citizens. In their culture, Max Weber's legal rational definition of legitimacy would be the most appropriate.

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72 Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Military Policy in Small Wars: The Case of El Salvador* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988), 76–79.

73 Bacevich, *American Military Policy in Small Wars*, 78.

Prior to the United States entering El Salvador in the early 1980s, the Salvadorian government served as a symbol of injustice to the revolutionaries. Up until the 1970s, the social structure in El Salvador was characterized as a feudal system in which a small number of elites owned the land and ran the military and government, while the peasant class provided the labor without representation or influence in their government. In response to social dissidents, the ESAF conducted large-scale indiscriminant operations in revolutionary controlled zones of the country. These actions further fueled the crisis, improved the recruiting efforts of the revolutionaries and created external support for the revolutionaries' cause. The extreme poverty, lack of political representation, and large-scale military repression placed the government of El Salvador in a crisis of legitimacy.[74]

In dealing with the crisis prior to U.S. support, the Salvadorian government primarily used a military approach to counter the insurgency. The ruling elites employed the ESAF to brutally block attempts at reforms that threatened their power and control of both the government and the military. In 1979 and 1980, the harsh tactics employed by the ESAF forced the revolutionaries underground; this repression further drove them toward violence as a means to affect change.

However, despite creating greater dissent in 1979–1980, the Salvadorian government did make small reforms targeted at the core grievances espoused by the revolutionaries. The government of El Salvador conducted basic land reforms such as expropriating larger farms and transitioning them into cooperatives; although, more were required to have a meaningful impact.[75] Beyond land reforms, the rise of political parties signaled a greater willingness to support human rights and the concept of democracy. Additionally, the promotion of young reformist military officers was encouraged to provide balance against a historically brutal officer corp. Unfortunately, most of these reforms failed to produce organizational change at that time. Despite the disappointing attempt at reform, the first junta started the conversation that eventually led to a legitimate and democratically elected government.

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74 Benjamin, Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1991), 8–9.

75 William, D. Stanley, "El Salvador: State-Building before and After Democratization, 1980–95." Third World Quarterly 27, no. 1 (2006): 104.

Salvadorian legitimacy can be qualified through consideration of the government's reform efforts and the ESAF's approach to the insurgency. Measuring legitimacy in relative terms assists in characterizing a government that falls between legitimate and illegitimate. In El Salvador, the ruling classes' disregard for social mobility and the military's lack of regard for human rights and accountability suggest that the government of El Salvador existed to the left of center on the legitimacy scale. As such, some government actions contributed to the rise of the FMLN. Despite these contributions, the government still retained enough legitimacy to prevent the FMLN from garnering widespread popular support. Furthermore, the character of the military remained largely unchanged until the United States became involved in the conflict in early 1981.

2. Capacity to Deny Sanctuary and Support

A host country's ability and willingness to deny insurgent sanctuary and the support associated with that sanctuary is considered a strong predictor of success in an intrastate conflict.[76] Denying sanctuary means denying the majority of sanctuary available to the insurgents and actively targeting the support they receive as a function of that sanctuary. When determining a host government's capacity to deny sanctuary prior to U.S. support, it is important to consider if government forces contest insurgent controlled areas. Further, in cases where external support and sanctuary do exist, it is important to determine whether the government engages other governments where the external sanctuary and support originates.[77]

The revolutionary groups that arose in the 1970s enjoyed a degree of internal sanctuary in most of the 14 provinces of El Salvador. They formed what were referred to as "zones of popular control" in the rural areas.[78] Following the stitching together of rebel groups into the FMLN in 1979, preparations were made to organize and establish an extensive international support network. The FMLN divided the country into five

[76] Record, "Why the Strong Lose," 22.

[77] Celeski, "Attacking Insurgent Space: Sanctuary Denial," 54.

[78] Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, *El Salvador, the Other War* (Albuquerque, NM: Interhemispheric, 1986), 2.

separate war fronts and established guerrilla command structures complete with specific responsibilities that supported the revolution as a whole. Each of these fronts was divided into three zones: the rear guard area, defensive zone, and expansion zone. The rearguard zone was designated to house the command and control elements, as well as key logistic infrastructure. The rearguard served as the most secure and least likely to be surprised by the ESAF. The second zone was the defensive zone, an area in which most of the fighting occurred between the ESAF and the guerrillas.[79] Many of the guerrilla forces used these areas temporarily to avoid ESAF offensives. In numerous cases, the ESAF displaced the population from the defensive zone because it employed indiscriminant operations in these areas. Ultimately, the defensive zone served as a buffer for ESAF attempts to strike into the rearguard areas. The third zone, the expansion zone, is where the guerrillas attempted to mobilize additional support and recruits to join their revolution. Beyond the five fronts within El Salvador, external sanctuary and support was also readily available to the insurgents. Several FMLN senior leaders established headquarters and operated out of Nicaragua. Additionally, Honduras served as another area of refuge and a source of logistic support to the guerrillas.[80] Although more separated geographically, Cuba channeled extensive support through neighboring countries. Ultimately, Soviet weapons enabled the Cuban and Nicaraguan's support to the FMLN. As a result, from 1979–1981, the FMLN guerrillas were better supplied than the ESAF.[81]

The ESAF's ability to deny sanctuary and associated support prior to U.S. intervention in 1981 should be measured in relative terms. In response to the rising discontent of the country's rural peasants, the ESAF employed harsh measures against the population to maintain control. These measures included death squads, which killed both political adversaries and sympathizers of the revolution. In 1980–81, death squads displaced revolutionary leadership through their highly effective intimidation efforts. As

79 Alvarez, *Revolutionary War to Democratic Revolution*, 43–52.

80 Rabasa, et al., *From Insurgency to Stability*, 77.

81 Diana Villiers Negroponte, *Seeking Peace in El Salvador: The Struggle to Reconstruct a Nation at the End of the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 83; Jose Angel Moroni Bracamonte and David E. Spencer, *Strategy and Tactics of the Salvadoran FMLN Guerrillas: Last Battle of the Cold War, Blueprint for Future Conflicts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995), 175.

a result, the revolution's "diplomatic core" operated outside of the country.[82] Although effective at denying internal sanctuary to some elements, the ESAF was not effective at denying external sanctuary in the early years. Additionally, the FMLN's multi-faceted support structure made denial of sanctuary nearly impossible. When the ESAF was effective at disrupting support along one avenue, the level of support from another was increased. Prior to receiving its own external support, the Salvadorian government had limited means to address the external sanctuary and support provided to the FMLN. Furthermore, because El Salvador shared borders with three countries that either directly provided or allowed support to pass through their countries to the revolutionaries, sealing the borders was beyond the capacity of the ESAF in the early years of both the civil war and the insurgency phases of the conflict.[83]

Moreover, in the late 1970s, the ESAF's size and level of training were inadequate to defeat the revolutionaries in El Salvador. During this time, the ESAF had roughly 11,000 soldiers, and most lacked training in counterinsurgency operations. Despite these deficiencies, the ESAF did conduct operations to destroy revolutionary support and safe havens. The desire to destroy the revolution was real; however, the ESAF's disregard for human rights did more to fuel the conflict than to stop it. It became clear by 1980 that neither the FMLN nor the ESAF could decisively maintain an advantage over the other, which led the rest of the world to categorize the conflict as a civil war.

The Salvadorian government recognized the need to deny FMLN sanctuary; however, its limitations in military capacity and knowledge of counterinsurgency warfare limited its effectiveness. Failing to understand how best to deny sanctuary, the ESAF chose an attrition strategy that undermined any attempts at reforms. Further, the ESAF was limited in its ability to operate in the FMLN rear areas due to long operational lines of communication and a lack of airmobile assets. Prior to U.S. support, the Salvadorian

82 Barry, Preusch, *El Salvador the Other War,* 2.

83 Directorate of Intelligence, *El Salvador's Insurgents: Key Capabilities and Vulnerabilities an Intelligence Assessment* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1990), 7.

government had the ability to disrupt insurgent sanctuary internally, but was largely unable to disrupt external sanctuary and support.

3. Salvadorian Objectives

Due to numerous transitions within the government and the realistic assumption that U.S. support was forthcoming, Salvadorian objectives evolved throughout the course of the conflict. Early objectives revolved around the destruction of the FMLN, retention of control and development of security force capacity. Later objectives focused more on reforms, civic-action, economic development and the sustainment of U.S. support to the military and development programs.

After watching the Sandinistas overthrow of the Somoza government in neighboring Nicaragua in 1979, the Salvadorian government recognized that changes in the country were necessary.[84] In spite of this recognition, numerous political factions contested the changes. In 1979, a bloodless coup led by young military officers replaced the existing government. Objectives of the newly formed junta included implementing a civil-military government to replace the exclusively military-run government. Additionally, the junta pushed land and economic reforms to address the growing dissatisfaction of the middle and working class. However, the entrenched military establishment and sponsoring oligarchs prevented the implementation of these reforms.[85] Subsequent governments offered fewer reforms, specifically regarding human rights prosecutions within the military the economy and land redistribution.

Following the transition to a democratic government in 1984, Salvadorian objectives remained closely tied to the retention of power and control. Although changes occurred during Duarte's presidency, many were largely ineffective at achieving their desired purpose, mostly because they were either poorly conceived or poorly implemented. The true objectives of the Salvadorian government appeared to be on economic development benefiting the few and military defeat of the rebels. The ESAF

84 Barry, Preusch, *El Salvador the Other War, 5.*

85 Cynthia Arnson, *A Revolution Confronts the United States* (Washington, DC: Institute for Policy Studies, 1982), 41–44.

had grown to 40,000 soldiers by that time and was demonstrating increasing success against the FMLN.[86] Essentially, the aim was to give up the fewest concessions necessary to prevent the population from supporting the FMLN. The interests of entrenched leaders in the ESAF, land-owning elites, and politicians drove these objectives. As a whole, these stakeholders were determined to militarily defeat the insurgency and retain control rather than to address the root causes of the conflict.

4. Shared Political Objectives

The United States' early policy goals in El Salvador were not clearly articulated.[87] Later documents that clarified U.S. objectives included the *Woerner Report* (1981), the *National Campaign Plan* (NCP)(1983), and the *Kissinger Commission* (1984). The Woerner Report essentially focused on the development of the ESAF while the NCP served as an overall strategy. Finally, the Kissinger Commission made the argument to the American people that it was important to continue to support the Salvadorian government.[88] Prior to these documents, the 1981 Annual *Integrated Assessment of Security Assistance for the United States Objectives in El Salvador* listed the following informal goals: "prevention of the takeover of a friendly neighbor by communist guerrillas, sustainment of a democratic Salvadorian government, and prevention of further deterioration of the Salvadorian economy."[89] However, no formal strategy moved the Salvadorian government toward achieving these goals.

Despite a lack of clear policy objectives, the U.S. and Salvadorian governments were able to find common ground. The intersection of U.S. and Salvadorian interests were most evident in the destruction of the FMLN. Furthermore, both countries understood that economic development was necessary in reinforcing legitimacy and preventing future unrest. By 1984, the United States and El Salvador had broadened their objectives to include developing popular support through reforms to the military and the

86 Bacevich, *American Military Policy Small Wars*, 5–6.

87 Bacevich, *American Military Policy Small Wars*, 19.

88 Bacevich, *American Military Policy Small Wars*, 21–22.

89 Hugh Byrne and para la Liberacion, Frente Farabundo Marti, *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 75.

judiciary, bolstering village level civil defense, employing psychological operations, providing civic-action in contested areas and integrating a nationwide counterinsurgency strategy.

The challenge in articulating the shared objectives between El Salvador and the United States is that there were numerous stakeholders on both sides influencing these objectives throughout the conflict. For example, one of the United States' primary objectives was to sustain a democratic El Salvador; to achieve this, the ESAF had to subordinate themselves to civilian leadership. The military establishment and oligarch supporters understood this to mean a weakening of their position and influence. Beyond the ESAF, President Duarte's political support from his party, the PDC, began to wane in the mid-to late 1980s as campaign reforms failed to materialize. Furthermore, the conditions placed on the Salvadorian government for continued U.S. support placed President Duarte at odds with his grassroots support. In spite of political challenges, El Salvador experienced a political party turnover from the PDC to the *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista* (ARENA) in 1989, a testament to its electoral process.

A final shift of shared objectives between the United States and the Salvadorian government occurred following the FMLN's final offensive in 1989. Despite predictions to the contrary, the FMLN mounted a large-scale offensive against the capital. Ultimately, ESAF were able to repel the attack and the FMLN's assumed popular support failed to materialize. The offensive clarified that neither the ESAF nor the FMLN were capable of defeating each other.[90] Both the United States and the government of El Salvador made it their objective to reach a settlement. After years of mediation and negotiations, the FMLN and the Salvadorian government reached a negotiated settlement in 1992.[91] By the conclusion of El Salvador's civil war, the combined efforts of the United States and the government of El Salvador had prevented the further spread of communism, solidified democratic institutions, and reintegrated dissidents back into the fold.[92]

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90 Byrne, *El Salvador's Civil War,* 176.

91 Byrne, *El Salvador's Civil War,* 213.

92 Negroponte, *Seeking Peace in El Salvador,* 107.

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IV. CASE 3: AFGHANISTAN

On September 11, 2001, al Qaeda conducted a coordinated attack against the United States, killing nearly 3000 Americans. The U.S. government determined that the Taliban (TB) had provided al Qaeda (AQ) the sanctuary and support necessary to mount the attack. In response, members of the U.S. Special Forces and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) departed for Afghanistan to link-up with the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance. In a matter of months, U.S.-directed air strikes combined with a Northern Alliance ground offensive destroyed the majority of the TB's fighting formations and scattered AQ members within Afghanistan while others fled to Pakistan.[93]

At the conclusion of the combined offensive, the U.S. military began deploying large conventional units to Afghanistan. The intent was to root out and destroy the remaining TB and AQ to prevent future attacks against the United States. Because the TB had harbored Osama Bin Laden and refused U.S. requests to turn him over, the TB government and its fighters became U.S. targets. In late 2001–2002, TB ranks had been severely depleted, and as a result, the remaining fighters resorted to guerrilla tactics to avoid direct confrontation with the numerically superior coalition forces. Consequently, in 2003 the United States developed a new campaign plan; included in this plan was a call to shift from combat operations to stability operations. Despite this prioritization, operations continued to focus largely on combat and neglected the development efforts of the Afghani military and the interim government.[94] By this time, the conflict had changed from an interstate conflict to an insurgency. As a result, from 2003–2009, the security situation deteriorated leaving the United States questioning the possibility of a desirable outcome.[95]

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93 Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, Vol. 4 (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2008), 91;Hy Rothstein, "America's Longest War," in *Afghan Endgames: Strategy and Policy Choices for America's Longest War*, eds. John Arquilla and Hy Rothstein (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 59–81.

94 Rothstein, "Americas Longest War," 60–61.

95 Rothstein, "Americas Longest War," 78.

The United States' reliance on a largely unilateral, conventional approach to the insurgency failed to produce a favorable situation in Afghanistan. Additionally, TB numbers went from an estimated 3000 in 2004 to 30,000 in 2010.[96] Furthermore, Afghan Security Forces (ASF) had been plagued with issues; ultimately, these forces lacked the ability to secure the population. In 2009, the Obama administration responded to this unsatisfactory situation by replacing the senior military officer in Afghanistan, outlining a more population centric strategy for COIN, and devoting additional resources to the conflict.[97]

The interim Afghan government was established in early 2002, followed two years later by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA). Conditions in Afghanistan following the establishment of the interim government serve as the departure point for this case study. Like the previous two case studies, the conflict in Afghanistan from 2002 forward will be evaluated based on the host government's level of legitimacy, capacity and resolve to deny insurgent sanctuary and associated support, and shared political objectives with the United States. Unlike the previous two case studies, the insurgency in Afghanistan immediately followed the interstate conflict between the United States and the TB government. Notably, the government of Afghanistan did not request U.S. support in fighting its insurgency, and the United States did not anticipate serving in a counterinsurgent role as the TB re-emerged in late 2002.

1. Afghanistan Government Illegitimacy

Any legitimacy that the GIRoA enjoys is a result of the regard it has demonstrated for its people. However, unlike the two countries discussed in previous cases, Afghanistan has had historically decentralized governance; much of its power has been pushed out to local authorities and tribal leaders. Following Weber's classifications, "Afghanistan's culture is based on traditional legitimacy reinforced by charismatic (religious) legitimacy."[98] Democracy and rational legal approaches are not something

96 Rothstein, "Americas Longest War," 62.

97 Rothstein, "Americas Longest War," 62–63.

98 Mason, *Strategic Lesson Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,* 142.

Afghans value.[99] Instead, indicators of legitimacy include the following at the local level: "delivery of justice, mediation, and dispute resolution."[100] Beyond local considerations, a government that abides by Islamic ideals, delivers basic services, provides security, and resists external influences will also enjoy a greater perception of legitimacy. Although accepting of culturally reasonable levels of corruption, minimizing governmental corruption would also have a legitimizing impact.[101] However, Afghan governance has faced a legitimacy crisis since its inception in 2002. Assessing a government's legitimacy includes determining how it governs and provides for its population, and how order is maintained. The evaluation of governance and security forces will shape the following legitimacy discussion.

The Afghan government has suffered in popular support as a result of a faulty foundation. Following the toppling of the TB government in late 2001, the *Loya Jirga* or grand assembly was established to oversee interim governance decisions. In early proceedings, the U.S. backed factional leader, Hamid Karzai, was ushered into the role of interim leader. Ironically, Karzai's position was opposed by 75% of the Loya Jirga's delegates, who were in favor of the exiled King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah. Under an air of secrecy, U.S. diplomats coerced the king to withdraw from consideration as the interim leader and endorse Hamid Karzai, a step that was largely perceived as U.S. meddling in the process.[102] Although not initially, the population came to view Karzai and many other members of both the upper and lower houses of the government as criminally corrupt. Several references have been made to the Karzai family's illicit activities in Kandahar as evidence to these claims.[103] Additionally, Karzai—backed by the U.S. government—

99 Rothstein and Arquilla, *Understanding the Afghan Challenge,* 8–9.

100 Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 148.

101 Jade I. Rodriguez and Rebecca Lorentz, "Civil and Uncivil Society," in *Afghan Endgames: Strategy and Policy Choices for America's Longest War*, eds. John Arquilla and Hy Rothstein (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 193–197.

102 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,*143–144; Thomas H. Johnson and Chris M. Mason, "Refighting the Last War: Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template," *Military Review,* (November–December 2009): 4.

103 Michael Hughes, "Afghanistan Needs a Hero: How a Unifying National Leader can Bring Peace," *The World Post,* accessed April 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-hughes/afghanistan-needs-a-hero_b_610622.html.

extended the reach of the central government, a move designed to consolidate control over regional warlords and local religious leaders.[104]

The second component, ASF, serves as an additional variable that either contributes or detracts from the GIRoA's legitimacy. Despite numerous shortcomings, the Afghan National Army (ANA) in general is perceived favorably among the population. Factors that informed this opinion as of 2008 included the ANA's tenacity in combat, ability to gather intelligence, and higher level of training as compared to that of the police.[105] This is not to say that units are able to effectively provide security or have resisted the temptations of corruption; by U.S. standards, the ANA have demonstrated a lack of ability and discipline.[106] The Afghan National Police (ANP) has further been cited as having excessive corruption, lacking the most basic education and training, and being ill equipped to counter an insurgency, and ultimately having the highest desertion rates among security forces.[107] Police corruption has been correlated with inadequate initial screening and an overall lack of mentorship. According to retired Foreign Service officer Chris Mason, "The ANP are considered a net security negative, in the sense that their existence contributes more overall to insecurity than security."[108] In sum, the GIRoA continues to suffer from the perception of illegitimacy, despite numerous elections, billions of dollars in aid, and larger and improved security forces.

2. Capacity to Deny Sanctuary

In this case, denying sanctuary refers to denying the majority of sanctuary available to the insurgents and actively targeting the support insurgents receive as a result of that sanctuary. Functionally, there are areas the ASF will not contest inside Afghanistan. It is important to consider that if Afghanistan is unable to secure its borders, does it engage governments with shared borders where the sanctuary and support originates?

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104 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,* 144.

105 Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,* 74–75.

106 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,* 212.

107 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,* 26.

108 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,* 33.

Internally, Afghanistan poses several challenges to denying insurgent sanctuary. The combination of wide-open spaces and low population density contribute to extremely porous shared borders with Pakistan. Much of Afghanistan lacks a developed road infrastructure, and passage in some places can only be accomplished on foot, by animal or by small motorcycle. Afghanistan contains numerous valleys surrounded by impassable mountains, which afford protected environments for insurgent leadership to regroup and train fighters. Furthermore, weather prevents access to some of the more mountainous areas during the winter. Taken as a whole, Afghanistan's topography affords significant opportunities for insurgent sanctuary. Beyond terrain, the TB receives social sanctuary in many rural areas inside Afghanistan. The lack of ASF presence has essentially forced the people decide which entity to support to ensure survival. In many cases, the answer to this question favors the TB, which is recognized by 30% of the population as a legitimate authority in Afghanistan.[109]

Externally, Afghanistan poses additional challenges to denying sanctuary. During the Coalition/Northern Alliance offensive in 2001, many of the scattered TB and AQ fighters received sanctuary in neighboring Pakistan. Additionally, the TB received external support from the global jihadist network, Pakistani government officials, criminal networks, and militias in the federally administered tribal areas (FATA) of Pakistan.[110] Support remains to this day because of Afghanistan's inability to secure its borders. Pakistani leaders are content to have Afghanistan remain unstable, allowing them to assert a level of influence over Afghan territory through their TB proxies.[111]

Denying safe havens to the TB has produced mixed results in some areas, as sanctuary has evolved over the duration of the conflict. For example, the Paktika province provided safe havens in which the TB freely and openly operated during the early 2000s. But following large International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF)

109 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq*, 142–144.

110 Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 37–38.

111 Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 35.

operations this sanctuary was disrupted.[112] However, as of 2016, extensive insurgent sanctuary persists in the Paktika province. Direct intervention from ISAF disrupted some of the more difficult-to-reach internal sanctuaries available to the TB through an extensive drone surveillance and targeting campaign. To this day, several internal areas have remained largely uncontested by the ASF and ISAF. The terrain and lack of proximity to military infrastructure in the provinces of Nangahar, Nuristan, and Kunar (N2K) have made ISAF largely ineffective at denying sanctuary. Despite some successes with drones, neither GIRoA nor the ISAF have demonstrated the capacity and resolve to deny sanctuary sufficiently to defeat the TB insurgency.

3. Shared Political Objectives

The Afghanistan case, unlike the previous two cases, presents challenges when delineating between the political objectives of the GIRoA and those of the United States. The United States' presence in Afghanistan, and its large role in developing both the interim and elected governments of Afghanistan, blurs the line of ownership. Objectives laid out by the United States were largely accepted by President Karzai and later turned into Afghan objectives.[113] However, the number of shared objectives between the United States Government (USG) and the GIRoA fails to tell the entire story. The ideals written in the newly developed constitution espoused by Afghan leaders closest to the United States did not accurately reflect the values of those in rural Afghanistan.[114] From a distance, the United States and the GIRoA appeared to move in the same direction following the elections, but given the underlying discrepancies between the two countries' goals, this path has not yet led to a desirable conclusion.

The United States' overarching goal was to prevent future attacks against the United States by "…disrupting, dismantling, and defeating AQ and deny terrorists the use

112 Donald P. Wright, JR Bird, SE Clay, PW Connors, SC Farquhar, LC Garcia, and DV Wey, *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), 282.

113 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,* 144–146; Rothstein, Arquilla, "Understanding the Afghan Challenge," 8–9.

114 Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq,* 144–146.

of safe havens in either Afghanistan or Pakistan."[115] U.S. leaders recognized that to accomplish these goals, Afghanistan's capacity to govern and to secure its population would need to be bolstered substantially.[116] On the heels of the ratification of the Afghan constitution and the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004–2005, the "Joint Declaration of the United States-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership," closely mirroring ideals in the constitution, provided the following objectives: "dedication to the rule of law"; "protection of human rights"; "support for democratic governance"; "defeat of international terrorism"; and "Afghan security," "sovereignty," "independence," and "territorial integrity."[117] These objectives were designed to bring stability to Afghanistan and permit the United States to hand its responsibilities over to a capable and sovereign state.

Despite these intentions, forcing a U.S. perspective onto the people of Afghanistan has resulted in a "democracy" that does not accurately reflect the ideals of the population. Afghan citizens recognize security, sovereignty, and independence; however, the rule of law, human rights, and democratic governance are foreign concepts. Historically, a traditional legal approach to rules was in the place where the rule of law exists today. Traditional laws relied upon tribal leaders and religious mullahs to administer justice and arbitration. In other words, traditional rights served as the foundation for how people were treated as opposed to today's notion of human rights.[118]

Additionally, leaders in the United States and Afghanistan have prioritized these shared objectives differently. The GIRoA has remained focused on its sovereignty and independence, conditions recognized as necessary for the U.S. coalition to conclude its commitments. Appropriately, both governments have pursued larger, more capable military and police forces; nevertheless, despite the shared desire for improved security, the GIRoA has proved both incapable and uncommitted to controlling corruption. While

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115 Rothstein and Arquilla, "Understanding the Afghan Challenge," 4.

116 Rothstein and Arquilla, "Understanding the Afghan Challenge," 5.

117 Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*; Loya, Jirga, "The Constitution of Afghanistan: The Unofficial English Translation, *Afghanembassy.com, ratified January 26, 2004*,http://www.afghanembassy.com.pl/afg/images/pliki/TheConstitution.pdf. 2.

118 Rothstein and Arquilla, "Understanding the Afghan Challenge," 9.

the shared objective of improving security through increased ASF capacity existed, controlling corruption was not a top priority for the GIRoA. On the coalition side, National Guard soldiers and international partners of the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Phoenix conducted the majority of the training of both the ANA and the ANP.[119] Had the United States placed a greater premium on capacity building rather than killing insurgents, forces task organized to train the ANA may have been different.[120] Improvements to governance and the provision of justice have been further stifled by corruption. In 2006, Afghanistan's justice system was one of, if not the least, effective systems in the world.[121] Meanwhile, Karzai remained focused on consolidating power and control of the central government. Karzai had perceived the country's militias and warlords as a greater threat to the GIRoA than the TB.[122]

When the security situation in Afghanistan reached its worst point in early 2009, the USG and the GIRoA shifted toward a more population-centric strategy. In response, the United States reprioritized its focus from Iraq to Afghanistan. Along with new leadership came a revised roadmap to achieving U.S. objectives. The new strategy followed three lines of operation (LOO): "security," "governance," and "development."[123] Improvements to security were well recognized as a necessary condition to facilitate future reconstruction and development efforts. Increased focus on developing the capacity of the ASF prompted additional U.S. and Afghan tactical level partnerships. Efforts were made to create accountability and to reduce corruption in the government. Finally, development projects were funded and executed to provide for basic needs and to reinforce the government's move toward legitimacy.[124]

Although Afghanistan remains a book to which the conclusion has not yet been written, it appears unlikely that the U.S. objectives of "disrupting, dismantling, and

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119 Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War,* 264–265.

120 Rothstein, "America's Longest War," 61.

121 Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,* 83–84.

122 Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Post War Governance, Security, and a U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2004), 15.

123 Rothstein, "Americas Longest War," 62.

124 Rothstein, "Americas Longest War," 62–65.

defeating AQ and denying terrorists the use of safe havens in both Afghanistan or Pakistan"[125] will ever be realized. Despite reductions in AQ numbers and prominence, the emergence of the Islamic State in Afghanistan seems to fill a similar niche. Although an argument can be made that AQ lost the strength of its foothold in Afghanistan, does it matter? Pakistan provides readily available sanctuary and support to the TB, as do some parts of Afghanistan, another reality that is unlikely to change.

Following the evaluation of the Afghan government's level of legitimacy, capacity to deny sanctuary, and shared political objectives with the United States, an unfavorable outcome seems inevitable. The resounding conclusion from the first variable is that the government lacks legitimacy. The government's illegitimate foundation, rampant corruption, and troubled security forces led to this conclusion. Afghan's inability to deny sanctuary and support can be directly traced to harsh terrain, unsecure borders, and deficient security forces. Moreover, the overall prioritization of the shared objectives appears to have been a contributing factor to some of the yet unachieved objectives. Finally, at a more basic level, GIRoA's officially shared objectives with the United States, did not an accurately reflect the wishes of the Afghan population.

125 Rothstein and Arquilla, "Understanding the Afghan Challenge," 4.

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V. CASE 4: IRAQ

Before the United States overthrow of the Iraqi regime in 2003 by armed invasion, Saddam Hussein was an extremely destabilizing figure in the region. Hussein seized power in Iraq following the former president's resignation in 1979 and reinforced the Ba'ath party to strengthen his dictatorship. Although Ba'athists were a minority as Sunni Muslims, they maintained a dominant grip on society. Amid growing concerns over the spread of revolutionary Shia ideology, Hussein attacked Iran in 1980. The subsequent eight-year Iran–Iraq war was costly in both money and lives. Following an indecisive conclusion, Hussein turned his attention inward toward groups that had assisted the Iranian cause during the war, especially the Kurdish and Shi'ite populations, which had suffered brutal and repressive treatment. Having depleted much of the country's wealth and incurred wartime debts, Hussein sought to recoup some of the cost from Kuwait. Pretexts were made as to why the Kuwaitis owed the Iraqis oil revenues, and when the Kuwaiti government refused to pay, Hussein invaded. The United States, the UN, and regional partners intervened, and in a matter of five weeks in 1991, the Iraqi military was forcibly removed from Kuwait.[126]

With an already negative perception of Iraqi intentions in the Middle East, President George W. Bush made it clearly articulated that the United States would not allow Iraq to develop or acquire nuclear weapons. In his 2003 state-of-the-union address, Bush articulated U.S. concerns about weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and ties to terrorist organizations in Iraq.[127] Eventually, Iraq's denial of inspector access to its nuclear facilities prompted President Bush's decision to remove Hussein. By the end of March 2003, the Iraqi regime and its military were overthrown.

The rapid collapse of Hussein's government and security apparatus created a complex environment for the development of a new Iraqi government. After a brief lull, the Sunni insurgency arose to contest the U.S. occupation. The insurgency was largely

126 Bruce Pirnie and Edward O'Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq (2003-2006),* Vol. 2 (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2008), 1–4.

127 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq,* 5.

composed of former Ba'athist extremists and a small number of foreign fighters.[128] Under these conditions, the Iraqi interim government in combination with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) crafted an interim constitution. The constitution's provisions included transitioning to a sovereign Iraqi interim government by the end of June 2004. In a little more than a year after the overthrowing of Saddam Hussein, the first democratic elections to decide membership on the Transitional National Assembly were held in January 2005. By mid-October, Iraqis had voted to accept the draft constitution and by December 2005 the Council of Representatives election under the newly approved constitution was completed. Despite the accomplishment of several democratic milestones, sectarian violence reached unprecedented levels by mid-2006.[129]

Like the Afghanistan case, Iraq began as an interstate conflict and transitioned to an insurgency, that later evolved into a civil war. The period following the interim government's creation through the end of 2006 will serve as the period to evaluate the Iraqi government's level of legitimacy, capacity to deny sanctuary, and shared political objectives with the United States.

1. Iraqi Government Legitimacy

Iraqi rule in modern history has been characterized by numerous violent transitions. Upon gaining independence from Great Britain in 1932, the Iraqi government shared similarities with British style monarchy. In October 1932, Iraq was admitted into the League of Nations as recognition for its respect for human rights. However, despite an early sense of nationalism among the population, the next several generations of Faisal Kings experienced growing unrest. In response to numerous uprisings, the kings as well as subsequent prime ministers began taking steps to consolidate power, largely transitioning the government to an oppressive autocracy. From the end of the monarchy in 1958 until the Ba'ath Party's ascendancy to power in 1968, Iraq experienced numerous military coups responsible for the deaths of thousands of Iraqis.[130] During the reign of the

128 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, 9.

129 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, 10–17.

130 The Law Library of Congress, *Iraq: Legal History and Traditions* (Washington, DC: Global Research Center, 2004), 16–25.

Ba'ath Party, repressive actions continued, despite Iraq declaring itself a "People's Democratic Republic." Elections to ministries and cabinet position with the government of Iraq were subject to pre-screening for adherence to Ba'ath party ideals. Numerous constitutions were promulgated throughout this period, each reinforced the powers afforded to the members of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). From 1979 through 2003, Hussein had effectively consolidated and retained control of Iraq.[131]

Despite Hussein's brutally oppressive nature and lack of regard for human rights, he had shaped people's expectations for legitimate governance. During his reign, Hussein had implemented economic reforms and modernized industry. Further, Iraqis experienced a greater acquisition of wealth, increased social mobility, improved education, better access to healthcare, and more land ownership.[132] Further, to generate goodwill, Hussein had provided oil subsidies, electricity, water, and other basic services; as a result, Iraqis retained an expectation for some of these basic provisions.

Focusing on culture, Iraqi citizens recognize all three of Weber's sources of legitimacy. The tribal structures and dynastic roots remained influential in Iraq, demonstrating legitimacy from traditional sources. Religious leaders of both Sunni and Shia sects had tremendous influence over the population, and the official religion of the country was Islam. The guiding role that religion plays in Iraq demonstrates the presence of Weber's charismatic classification of legitimacy. Finally, Iraq had a functioning legal system that was used to administer justice. Although the system was corrupted under Saddam, the Iraqi population was familiar with constitutional law, demonstrating that a legal component shaped governmental authority in Iraq.[133]

Within the established context of culture and historical precedence, the newly formed democracy in Iraq faced a steep legitimacy challenge. The GOI needed to strike a balance among the interests of the Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish populations. Additionally, the development of security forces capable of protecting the population from the growing

131 The Law Library of Congress, *Iraq: Legal History and Traditions*, 25–31.

132 The Law Library of Congress, *Iraq: Legal History and Traditions*, 28.

133 The Law Library of Congress, *Iraq: Legal History and Traditions*, 27–28.

number of insurgents, criminals, external fighters, and militia groups would also significantly increase. Ultimately, an Iraqi government that resisted external influences, minimized corruption, and embraced an equitable administration of justice would be afforded a degree of legitimacy.[134]

However, from its inception through the evaluated period (2003-2006), the GOI suffered from the perception of illegitimacy. The perception has been that Shia representatives dominated the interim and newly elected government. Further, the United States supported these newly elected leaders as they set out to consolidate control over Sunni populations. Sectarian divides increased under the newly formed government to an unprecedented level. The increased focus on sectarian related issues detracted from the government's ability to conduct meaningful reconciliation, and power sharing suffered.[135] After becoming fully sovereign with an approved constitution, the government lacked the resources and ability to stop the violence from the insurgency, Shia militias, and criminal enterprises. Reconstruction efforts were plagued with corruption by Iraqi governing officials and contractors. Concurrently, the USG demonstrated a lack of "unity of effort" between the Department of State (DOS) and the Department of Defense (DOD). In 2006 inadequate security forces were available to "hold" territory to facilitate the subsequent reconstruction projects in the "build" phase, of the clear, hold, build construct.[136] Much of the external support from the United States, as well as oil revenues, found their way to government officials as opposed to infrastructure projects. Furthermore, in a move the United States was largely complicit in, numerous individuals who were placed in the newly formed government were political exiles and/or had ties to extremist organizations—creating a disconnect between Iraqi politicians and the people at the local level who they represented.[137] The political elite did not share the priorities of the people and therefore failed to provide for their basic

134 Kenneth Michael Pollack, *A Switch in Time: A New Strategy for America in Iraq,* Vol. 7 (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 53.

135 Pollack, *A Switch in Time,* 54.

136 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq,* 67–69.

137 James Dobbins, *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority,* Vol. 1 (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2009), 41.

needs. In many ways the central government worked to suppress grass roots political movements, which were viewed as threats.[138]

Additionally, the government created security forces at a proficiency level and pace insufficient to meet the challenges of state building while fighting an insurgency. Following the U.S. invasion and subsequent de-Ba'athification, Iraqi security forces had dissolved, aside from a few traffic police. The task of developing the police as well as the army ultimately became the responsibility of the U.S. military. The Iraqi Army (IA) received the majority of resources and training while the police were poorly trained, criminally corrupt and largely infiltrated by Shia militias. Moreover, all Iraqi security forces lacked the basic capacity to secure the population. Iraqi security force's inability to provide adequate security is a function of sectarian issues among units and the Sunni militia's resolve toward countering the predominantly Shia comprised Iraqi Army.[139] In the early years of the U.S. occupation, it was clear that the United States failed to anticipate not only the ensuing insurgency but also the scope of reconstruction efforts that were required. To illustrate this point, early CPA assessments called for a 60,000 man Iraqi Army; the reality is that by 2006 the roughly 138,000 IA troops were still unable to secure the population.[140] In response to the lack of security, Shia areas relied largely on militias for both security and basic services, while Sunnis were forced to rely on militias and groups like AQ and the Islamic State of Iraq for protection.[141]

The government's inability to lead and secure the population reinforced the widespread perception of illegitimacy. In some sectors, close ties to the United States served to detract from Iraqi sovereignty and legitimacy. As a whole, the Shia and Sunni populations both questioned the motives of the United States; although, the Sunni population expressed this sentiment to a greater degree.[142] By 2006, intense corruption

138 Pollack, *A Switch in Time,* 54–55.

139 Hy Rothstein, "Lessons from Reconstructing Indigenous Security Forces in Iraq," in *The Three Circles of War: Understanding the Dynamics of the Conflict in Iraq*, eds. Heather S. Gregg, Hy S. Rothstein and John Arquilla, (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2010), 45–54.

140 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq,* 51–52.

141 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq,* 23.

142 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq,* 58–59.

still undermined the entire process, and the sectarian divides shifted the conflict in Iraq from an insurgency into a civil war, an escalation that reinforced the failures of the established government.

2. Capacity to Deny Sanctuary

A host country's ability and willingness to deny insurgent sanctuary, and its corresponding support associated with that sanctuary, serve as a strong determining factor when supporting a host nation fighting an internal conflict. Denying sanctuary refers to the counterinsurgent's capacity to contest the areas in which insurgents reside and receive support. Capacity and commitment toward this end should be measured in relative terms with an understanding that complete denial may be an unreasonable expectation. Sanctuary, in this research is discussed in general terms and encompasses a broader view than some literature suggests. With respect to external sanctuary and support, does the host government take measures to secure its borders? Does the government demonstrate a willingness to engage with neighboring states in which the sanctuary and support originates?

In contrast to the first two cases, the insurgency in Iraq relied on sanctuary and support from major urban areas, specifically within the Sunni triangle,[143] north and west of Baghdad. During the Hussein era, the Sunni Triangle contained the majority of the Ba'ath party, former military members, and internal guards known as the Fedayeen Saddam.[144] Prior to the fall of the regime and the disbanding of the military, Saddam had prepared for a resistance by pre-positioning munitions and supplies in homes and mosques of the Sunni Arab sectors of Iraq. Furthermore, as Iraqi Army fighters dispersed during the invasion, they took their weapons with them. Those actions produced a well-resourced and moderately trained insurgency.[145] Internal to Iraq, insurgents were supported both socially and financially by personal relationships and tribal ties, legitimate Sunni businesses, and sympathetic mosques and religious leaders. Externally, sanctuary

143 Michael Eisenstadt and Jeffrey White, *Assessing Iraq's Sunni Arab Insurgency*, Vol. 50 (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2005), 17.

144 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, 26.

145 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, 7–8.

was neither heavily relied upon nor essential. However, Syria did provide limited sanctuary to former Ba'ath Party leaders and turned a blind eye to smuggling activities.[146] External support essentially filled the gaps in internal support. External supporters included expatriated loyalists and wealthy donors from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Gulf States, and Europe. Although often referenced as the insurgency, AQ in Iraq prior to 2006 only comprised a small percentage of the Sunni fighters, while local Sunni militias and groups comprised the majority.

The sectarian divide created conditions in which Iraqi security forces were unable to contest both Sunni social and physical sanctuary without extensive coalition support. Unfortunately, coalition forces neither anticipated nor prepared for the ensuing insurgency. Fallujah served as a significant safe haven for AQ until late 2004; as a function of the delayed coalition strategy, Sunni insurgents had the time and space to develop their networks and were well prepared for the upcoming coalition operation. In cases where large operations were conducted in Najaf (mid-2004), Fallujah (late 2004), and Tal Afar (mid-2005), U.S. forces mostly led the operations. However, operations in Tal Afar did demonstrate an increased IA and police capacity. Beyond security force challenges, the Iraqi government's struggles to provide basic services made them ineffective at co-opting sympathetic Sunni populations. Sympathetic Sunni populations would not provide intelligence to security forces; from its inception, the government was unable to convince Sunni Arabs that it was not fixated on their destruction. These factors suggest that in urban areas, the GOI failed to provide sufficient security and essential services to the Sunni that would create the trust required to deny social sanctuary.

The GOI and its security forces did not demonstrate the ability to effectively deny sanctuary to Sunni insurgents. Despite improved proficiency and noticeable shifts toward greater independence, IA actions largely fueled the resolve of both Sunni militias and AQ.[147] Although violence increased in 2005–2006, joint counterinsurgency efforts did disrupt sanctuary. It is understandable that counterinsurgency capacity would grow with

146 Connable, Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, 40–42.

147 Rothstein, *Lessons from Reconstructing Indigenous Forces*, 49–50.

time and experience, since both the security forces and the government were new. Unfortunately, IA sectarianism and a lack of national identity diminished early effectiveness of the IA. As a result the insurgency had time and space to grow.[148] Within the ranks of the new security forces, former military members and Sunnis in general were not meaningfully represented. This lack of Sunni representation in the IA supported the perception that the army was essentially a government sponsored Shia militia. As a whole, the GOI lacked the capacity to deny sanctuary without extensive U.S. support, a situation that continued throughout the insurgency phase of the conflict.

3. Iraqi Political Objectives

Following the removal of Saddam Hussein, Iraqi objectives for governance appeared as unclear as U.S. reconstruction objectives. At that time, U.S. leaders sought input from Iraqi leaders who represented Shia, Sunni Arabs, and Kurdish perspectives. Problematically, the United States also relied on a large number of exiles to both shape priorities and serve within the GOI. As a result, priorities from exiles in some cases did not reflect the needs of the citizens. Shia and Kurdish populations sought to exact retribution on the Sunni's—a fact demonstrated by their harsh administration of the U.S. initiated de-Ba'athification process.[149] Despite disparate goals, the Transitional National Authority assisted by the CPA eventually developed and agreed upon an interim constitution that carried the government through 2004—the year Iraq officially re-obtained sovereignty.

By early 2005, Iraq had adopted a constitution that contained its official collective ideals and objectives. Throughout this process, the three major groups wanted to secure greater control to shape the future of Iraq. Formally, the Iraqi constitution outlines basic principles, rights and liberties, federal authority, powers of the federal authority, and powers of the regions or local governorates. The preamble of the Iraqi constitution specifies respect for the rule of law, justice, equality, human rights, diversity, the ending

148 Florence Gaub, *Rebuilding Armed Forces: Learning from Iraq and Lebanon* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), 26.

149 Dobbins, *Occupying Iraq Coalition Provisional Authority*, 328.

of terrorism, and national unity.[150] Although these goals are official, each of the three major groups had demonstrated varying degrees of effort toward achieving them. Following the 2005 elections, Kurdish politicians demonstrated familiarity with governance by their development and achievement of clear goals and by devotion to attaining Kurdish autonomy. Traditionally, Kurdish populations have strongly favored democracy and empowerment of regional governance and they have been more secular and more favorable to a U.S. presence in Iraq. Shia representatives comprised nearly 54% of the government in 2003.[151] They had several prominent political parties, a factor that can be challenging when trying to obtain consensus. For Shia populations, national identity ranked first, closely followed by their identity as Shia. They strongly favored the democratic process because they were the largest group. As a whole, the Shia politicians advocated for greater integration of religion into governance. Sunnis were characterized as the strongest nationalists of the three groups, opposed occupation by foreign forces, and sought freedom from foreign influences. As much as they appreciated self-determination, they did not believe that their needs would be fairly represented in the new government. Ultimately, amidst competing interests, the three major groups reached a degree of consensus by approving the constitution and participating in democratic elections.[152]

4. Shared Political Objectives

By 2003, President George W. Bush had adopted a doctrine of pre-emption. Under that doctrine, attacks would be justified against state and non-state actors if intelligence demonstrated significant future threats.[153] Under the auspice of preventing the spread of WMDs, the United States invaded Iraq to remove Hussein. Beyond Hussein's removal, the President articulated the following goals:

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150 Government of Iraq, *English Translation Iraq Constitution*. (Baghdad, Iraq: Government of Iraq, 2005), http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/454f50804.pdf.

151 Phebe Marr, *Who are Iraq's New Leaders? What do They Want?* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006), 10–11.

152 Marr, *Who are Iraq's New Leaders*, 13–16.

153 Jeffrey Record, *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism* (Carlisle, PA: Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), 11–12.

> Our mission in Iraq is clear. We're hunting down the terrorists. We're helping Iraqis build a free nation that is an ally in the war on terror. We're advancing freedom in the broader Middle East. We are removing a source of violence and instability, and laying the foundation of peace for our children and grandchildren.[154]

Following the collapse of the Iraqi regime, U.S. strategic objectives were more specifically laid out in the president's *National Strategy For Victory in Iraq*, and were referred to as the "eight pillars":

1. defeat the terrorists and neutralize the insurgency
2. transition Iraq to security self-reliance
3. help Iraqis forge a national compact for democratic government
4. help Iraq build government capacity and provide essential services
5. help Iraq strengthen its economy
6. help Iraq strengthen the rule of law and promote civil rights
7. increase international support for Iraq
8. strengthen understanding of coalition efforts and public isolation of insurgents.[155]

In several ways the president's eight pillars mirrored several of the GOI's objectives that were laid out in the new constitution. The GOI recognized the damaging effects that AQ and other groups posed to the country as a whole. Terrorists were not only killing Iraqis but also eroding GOI legitimacy. AQ highlighted the government's inability to protect the population. Additionally, the majority of Iraqis truly desired a degree of self-determination through a democratic process.[156] Both the USG and the GOI recognized that rebuilding the Iraqi Army was a critical component to establishing a free and democratic Iraq. As a result, the coalition as well as the GOI devoted significant focus and resources toward the IA's training and development. Despite not being well planned or adequately resourced, reconstruction and development of public works

154 George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2005), 3.

155 Bush, *National Strategy for Victory Iraq*, 28–35.

156 Marr, *Who Are Iraq's New Leaders*, 14–17.

projects served as an additional shared objective. Nevertheless, these efforts were subverted on several levels, due to corruption in critical governance roles and an overall lack of security.[157]

Differences between the goals of the GOI and the USG were more evident at the strategic level. Senior members in the Bush White House thought Iraq provided an opportunity to set an example in the region.[158] However, Iraq was not as concerned with democracy serving as an example of stability for neighboring countries in the Middle East. Further, their regard for transnational terrorism did not extend beyond the ability to influence affairs inside Iraq. The GOI struggled to deal with matters internal to Iraq and had little enthusiasm to combat regional terrorism.[159]

Determining the role of shared objectives in Iraq as a whole requires acknowledging the extremely complex human landscape. Despite a small number of universally accepted objectives, crucial differences remained among the Shia, Sunni, and the Kurds. Unfortunately, good intentions for equitable representation in governance elevated the importance of group identity and in turn diminished the sense of nationalism. As a result, sectarian divides served to overshadow the common ground that did exist. Furthermore, one the largest contributing factors initially fueling the Sunni insurgency in 2003 was the U.S. occupation. As a result, by 2006, nearly half the population of Iraq approved of attacks against the United States military.[160] Despite the United States' contributions to creating a sovereign Iraq, its presence served as a source of friction for both Sunni and Shia populations. However, in spite of the negative perceptions of the United States, the Sunni "Awakening" of late 2006, brought together Sunni's in the Anbar province with the U.S. military; Sunnis, assisted by U.S. soldiers, established local security to protect against the brutality demonstrated by both AQ and Shia militias. As a whole, the USG and the GOI shared seemingly appropriate objectives; however, securing

157 Dobbins, *Occupying Iraq Coalition Provisional Authority*, 173–177.

158 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, 5.

159 Daniel Byman, "Iraq and the Global War on Terrorism," *Columbia International Affairs Online*, last modified July 2007, www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2007/07/iraqterrorism.

160 Pirnie, O' Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, 58.

the population needed to be prioritized from the beginning. This inability to secure the population undermined the remaining objectives, and the three groups continued to rely on local militias, deepening their focus on self-interests and expanding the sectarian divide.

VI. CONCLUSION

Despite America's status as a great military power, there are counterinsurgencies that may be beyond America's capability to win. This analysis identifies three preconditions derived from extensive literature and examines their validity across four historical cases. Analysis of the salient points of each case finds that the critical factors identified—government legitimacy, ability to deny sanctuary, and shared political objectives—correlate with mission success. The Philippines and El Salvador are identified as successful counterinsurgencies, while Afghanistan and Iraq are deemed unsuccessful.

A. LEGITIMACY

The government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) demonstrated a moderate level of legitimacy before U.S. involvement and recognizing that within a democratic society reforms may be required. Reforms included the development of Muslim autonomous regions, decentralizing governance to the local level, and the introduction of programs designed to integrate former Muslim fighters into the armed forces of the Philippines (AFP). As a whole, the GRP's legitimacy grew as the United States' support and mentorship was incorporated into its counterinsurgency strategy.[161]

To a lesser degree, the government of El Salvador made attempts to reform perceived injustices. Despite the attempts of the land-owning elite and entrenched military to retain control, democratic political parties and ideals became popular in El Salvador in the early 1980s. The success of the elections of 1984, combined with the failure of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) to garner wide-scale popular support during the conflict, confirm that the government demonstrated sufficient legitimacy.[162]

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161 Legaspi, *Changing Role Local Government,*131; Lambert, et al., "Operation Enduring Freedom Philippines," 118–119.

162 Rabasa, et al., *From Insurgency to Stability*, 80–81.

By contrast, the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) was built on an illegitimate foundation. A strong central government ran counter to Afghan cultural expectations, and the early focus on building the army to the neglect of the police weakened the government's ability to secure the population. Both the government and security forces, most notably the police, demonstrated corruption beyond culturally acceptable levels. These factors led to a perception of illegitimacy.

Much like the GIRoA, the government of Iraq (GOI) suffered a legitimacy crisis. The decision to conduct de-Ba'thification and exclude former military members from prominent positions in the military and government proved problematic.[163] The newly formed government and military failed to secure the population and contributed directly to sectarian tensions. The population's reliance on militias for protection underscores the government's failures. Legitimacy was further undermined by the government's sponsorship of Shia death squads and corruption beyond acceptable norms.[164]

Governmental legitimacy was present in the Philippines and El Salvador, and absent in Afghanistan and Iraq. These cases support the hypothesis that a host government must be legitimate. Causal support is not asserted in this research; nevertheless, it is found that governmental legitimacy correlates with the success of U.S.-supported counterinsurgencies.

B. CAPACITY AND WILLINGNESS TO DENY SANCTUARY AND ASSOCIATED SUPPORT

The Islamic insurgency in the Philippines enjoyed both physical and social sanctuary in the south; they also received external support from Jemaah Islamiyah and Al Qaeda. The Philippine government demonstrated a capacity to deny this sanctuary, using the AFP to disrupt the internal structure of the Abu Sayyaf group and deny access to external support. Although the Philippine government needed better tactics, it

[163] Dobbins, *Occupying Iraq Coalition Provisional Authority*, 112–119.

[164] Rothstein, *Lessons from Reconstructing Indigenous Forces*, 46–48.

demonstrated a basic capacity and willingness to disrupt insurgent sanctuary and support.[165]

Sanctuary for the FMLN in El Salvador was considerable, both inside and outside the country. Before U.S. involvement, the El Salvador armed forces were known to employ death squads to assassinate FMLN leadership and supporters. In response, the FMLN "diplomatic core" operated from sanctuary given externally.[166] The armed forces of El Salvador (ESAF) demonstrated a basic capacity to disrupt internal sanctuary and support; however, their capacity to disrupt external support was limited. Like the AFP, the ESAF was committed to counterinsurgency, but their faulty understanding of operations and indiscriminant tactics proved counterproductive on numerous occasions. Despite these early deficiencies, ESAF capacity to deny insurgent sanctuary was greatly improved through the addition of U.S. trainers and advisors.

The harsh terrain and few roads in Afghanistan afforded the Taliban insurgency extensive opportunity for sanctuary and external support. Internally, the Taliban received significant social sanctuary in many places throughout Afghanistan. Therefore, it is unreasonable to expect that security forces would be able to achieve desired outcomes without adequate prioritization and strategy. In Afghanistan, the training of the military and police was not a priority for the first eight years of the conflict. In addition, the Afghan army was built to mirror the U.S. military, with American-style weapons, vehicles, and equipment, which proved unsustainable, and Afghan security forces failed to demonstrate a willingness and ability to deny insurgent sanctuary and support.

The creation of the Iraqi security forces (ISF) after the overthrow of Hussein posed extensive challenges. Early training and vetting of Iraqi Army (IA) members did little to identify and develop quality soldiers, and the lack of Sunni representation in the new army meant the IA was composed of predominantly Shia units.[167] As the sectarian divide increased, persons in mixed neighborhoods migrated to Shia or Sunni

165 Fellman, *Abu Sayyaf Group,* 5; Watts et al., *Countering Others' Insurgencies,* 77–78.

166 Barry, Preusch, *El Salvador, the Other War, 2.*

167 Rothstein, *Lessons from Reconstructing Indigenous Forces,* 48.

neighborhoods. This segregation, combined with a slow response by the ISF and the U.S. coalition, provided time and space for Sunni insurgents to fortify their physical and social sanctuaries,[168] especially in the Sunni triangle, west and north of Baghdad. In the period evaluated, the Iraqi government and security forces were incapable of denying physical and social sanctuary. Even with their combined efforts, the United States Government (USG) and the GOI only achieved limited denial. By 2006, despite increased IA capacity, the Sunni insurgency was able to gain popular support and social sanctuary. In general, the government and security forces failed to demonstrate a willingness and capacity to deny sanctuary and support.

The Philippine and El Salvador governments were willing and able to deny sanctuary and support, while Iraq and Afghanistan were not; the former were successful and the latter were unsuccessful. Although these cases do not establish causal support, they support hypothesis two: a capacity and willingness to deny insurgents sanctuary and associated support correlates to success in a U.S.-supported counterinsurgency.

C. SHARED POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

The Republic of the Philippines demonstrated a sufficient commitment to critical shared objectives with the United States. Its focus on improving the capacity of the security forces to counter Islamic insurgency improved its effectiveness, reduced collateral damage, and facilitated development projects. Because U.S. forces were not in a position to conduct unilateral operations, U.S. objectives were ultimately accomplished through the GRP and its security forces. The GRP's willingness to embrace U.S.-encouraged reforms contributed greatly to increased popular perception of legitimacy, and ultimately to success.

The Salvadorian government also shared sufficient objectives with the United States, though to a lesser degree. As in the Philippines, the United States Government (USG) focused on improving capacity through military advisors and aid, and the ESAF relinquished oversight to civilian authority, however reluctantly. The commitment by both countries to democracy facilitated peaceful transitions of power within the

168 Gaub, *Rebuilding Armed Forces: Iraq Lebanon*, 26.

government, and widespread popular support for the insurgency failed to materialize partly because of government progress.

In Afghanistan, the GIRoA failed to select objectives that reflected the wishes of the people. Although official documents indicate that the USG and the GIRoA shared several objectives, commitment to these objectives was lacking, and the government did not represent the culture and ideals of its population. Ultimately, American strategy and Afghan lack of commitment both contributed to failure.

In a similar fashion, the USG and the GOI shared several official objectives, but these were undermined by an inability to secure and protect the population. Beyond the lack of security, sectarianism between the Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish populations severely degraded each parties' progress toward shared objectives. The predominantly Shia government ignored Sunnis and their interests. Because the USG backed the GOI, the insurgents perceived the United States as an enemy. Given that the insurgency arose partly in response to the U.S. presence, it is unlikely that the majority of Iraqis will reach consensus on political objectives or that they will be compatible with U.S. goals.

The requirement for shared political objectives as a precondition for success follows a familiar pattern. The Philippine and Salvadorian cases demonstrated sufficient shared objectives to reach acceptable outcomes; Afghanistan and Iraq did not. The latter were problematic in that both governments were newly formed and perceived as largely illegitimate. Inevitably, the governments' objectives failed to encompass the ideals of their populations. The case studies support the hypothesis that the United States and a host government must share objectives. Although causation cannot be established, the evidence suggests correlation between shared political objectives and success in a U.S.-supported counterinsurgency.

This research concludes that the hypotheses that U.S.-supported counterinsurgency is likely to succeed when the host government is legitimate, denies sanctuary and support, and shares political objectives with the United States is affirmed, and that intervention is likely to fail if these preconditions are not present.

D. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF UNSELECTED PRECONDITIONS

Even though only three of the five identified preconditions were analyzed across the selected cases, inferences can be made about the degree to which the two remaining preconditions influenced outcomes. Political and social will had seemingly little impact in the cases of the Philippines and El Salvador; conversely, domestic pressure did affect strategies and timelines in both Afghanistan and Iraq. During both conflicts, the United States experienced changes in presidential administrations and senior cabinet positions. Specifically, President Obama ran his campaign on a platform of ending the conflicts. Still, the United States continued operations in Afghanistan and returned to Iraq in 2014 suggesting that political and social will did not play a central role. National identity also seemingly played a limited role in the Philippines and El Salvador. National identity challenges were far more pronounced in Afghanistan, as a result of the development of a strong central government. The GIRoA's attempts to consolidate control from established local powerbrokers failed to engender a sense of nationalism. In Iraq, a sense of nationalism never materialized. The cases seem to validate the selection of the critical preconditions.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The author recommends greater vetting of potential partners before committing U.S. support to a counterinsurgency. Further, policy makers should be informed on the impact of the identified preconditions on U.S. supported counterinsurgencies. Moreover, when policymakers disregard this council, they should be prepared for a protracted and costly endeavor. Ultimately, regardless of the perceived national security interest of the country affected by insurgency, the absence of critical preconditions greatly diminishes the likelihood of an acceptable outcome.

When a conflict transitions into a counterinsurgency, as in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is recommended that a reassessment of the identified variables should be made. If the host government is deficient in any critical preconditions, the United States should reevaluate acceptable outcomes or make the potentially unpopular decision to withdraw.

APPENDIX: SUPPLEMENTARY LITERATURE REVIEW

This appendix provides a broader review of the counterinsurgency literature to evaluate principles that shaped the understanding of critical preconditions for success in supporting a country affected by insurgency. The review is divided into general counterinsurgency principles and literature including specific cases. In the first section, the general principles of counterinsurgency, challenges associated with powerful nations countering insurgencies, and basic truths gleaned from both population- and enemy-centric approaches are presented. The second section reviews literature on specific cases to draw conclusions about counterinsurgency warfare and their applicability in future cases.

A. GENERAL COUNTERINSURGENCY PRINCIPLES

According to the *United States Counterinsurgency Guide*, produced by the United States Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, care should be taken in determining whether the U.S. should partner with a host government. The initiative provides eight variables for consideration when assessing a potential partner: the "government's character," "bias," "rule of law," "corruption," "civil–military relations," "economic viability," "presence of terrorist and transnational criminal organizations," and "border security and ungoverned spaces."[169]

The first four considerations are essentially criteria for determining the level of legitimacy of an affected government. A common thread includes compatibility with U.S. values or objectives and willingness to undertake reforms. With regard to the last two considerations, that is, terrorists and transnational criminal organizations and border security and ungoverned spaces, a couple of points are made. First, the affected government's response to terrorist and criminals in safe havens is important, because in most cases external occupying forces fuel local discontent and reactions that offset improved security. In addition, the security of borders and ungoverned space provides a

[169] U.S. Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide*, 37–40.

strong correlation to long-term success. Although it is acknowledged that external support can improve the capacity to secure borders and deny sanctuary, the host government ultimately must be capable of these tasks.

The interagency-initiative consideration acknowledges that affected governments will generally not score well along several criteria (and that it is likely that external support would be unnecessary if they did score well). It is suggested that "affected countries with sound political, economic and social fundamentals but poor conditions are much more likely to respond well to assistance than one where fundamentals are poor, even if current conditions are not so bad."[170]

David Kilcullen outlines the disadvantages of an expeditionary force with respect to counterinsurgency warfare. Because an expeditionary force external to the conflict will not remain indefinitely, an insurgency has the advantage of time. Working with a legitimate host government becomes more critical under time constraints. Kilcullen provides four questions to assist a potential external supporter in deciding whether to become involved:

1. What kind of state are we trying to build or assist?
2. How compatible is the local government's character with our own?
3. What kinds of states have proven viable in the past, in this country and with this population?
4. What evidence is there that the kind of state we are trying to build will be viable?[171]

Kilcullen stresses that shared objectives are a key element in the decision to support an ally fighting an insurgency.

Kilcullen's book is divided into ground level and global perspectives on insurgencies. Principles and outlines are provided to ascertain how certain environmental conditions may impact the counterinsurgency efforts of an external actor. Initially, the argument is made that although the characteristics of a given situation may be similar to

170 U.S. Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, U.S. *Government Counterinsurgency Guide*, 37–40.

171 David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 12.

other conflicts, solutions must be tailored to the environment to which they are applied. A clear understanding of core grievances and their importance to the population is necessary. Ultimately, building popular support is given a higher priority than killing the enemy; the main point is to alleviate suffering. Kilcullen believes that a COIN strategy should seek to attack the insurgent's strategy more than the enemy himself.

The challenges faced by an expeditionary force conducting counterinsurgency operations are compounded by cultural and physical distance from the conflict.[172] The concepts of time and end states play an important role as well. Kilcullen states that in these scenarios, extraction or end-of-mission timelines must be kept secret. He looks at challenges in Afghanistan that were complicated by civilian and military counterparts who were tasked with maintaining a semblance of unity of effort.[173]

Kilcullen describes counterinsurgency as a competition between a state and insurgents. The prize is legitimacy, which only the people can bestow.[174] The case of Afghanistan shows that the Taliban shadow government maintained legitimacy in many areas because of its ability to provide services better than the central government in Kabul. Included in Kilcullen's discussion are factors that have eroded government legitimacy in Afghanistan, including excessive corruption, a lack of government presence, an inept local justice system, and an election that was viewed as fraudulent by the majority of the population.[175] Kilcullen concludes that Afghanistan has a legitimacy crisis, asserting that a bottom-up approach to governance is most likely to improve the rule of law and associated legitimacy.[176]

Kilcullen emphasizes that a template for success in counterinsurgency operations does not exist. Despite the U.S. military's desire for set routine, it is important that each

[172] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency,* 12.

[173] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency,* 12.

[174] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency,* 5.

[175] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency,* 157–161.

[176] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency,* 159–161.

strategy be developed with a clear understanding of the conflict in which it is applied. A counterinsurgent force must adapt its strategy as the insurgency evolves.[177]

In "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," Kalev Sepp reviews 53 20th-century insurgencies that provide valuable data for counterinsurgents and external supporters of counterinsurgencies. He asserts that the focus of all civil and military efforts should be directed at the center of gravity; in the case of a counterinsurgency, this is most commonly the population and its support of the government.[178] The focus on human rights and the provision of basic human needs must always be a part of the strategy. Counterinsurgent law-enforcement efforts and the targeting of insurgents is a primary method to protect the population by providing security. Common counterinsurgency tactics include the use of population-control measures that assist in separating insurgents from among the population. Further, the political process can be optimized through effective communication with the population by explaining how it can help the government. Included in the political process is the reintegration of insurgents into society. The best practices highlighted by Sepp include the securing of borders and the extension of special executive authorities during emergency counterinsurgency situations. Special executive authorities are deviations from established law or policy for limited periods to achieve a desired effect.[179]

It is important to note the heavy emphasis placed on the role of the people by Kilcullen and Sepp. Many of their points refer to actions that are designed to address insurgent grievances or the population at large. The argument is that by addressing grievances, the government wins a greater degree of legitimacy and support from the population. The emphasis on this factor suggests the critical nature of legitimacy and implies that potential recipients of security-force assistance must exhibit a degree of legitimacy to be successful. Along the same line, a host government must be willing to conduct needed reforms. Finally, common perspectives on critical issues like meeting basic population needs is critical according to both Kilcullen and Sepp.

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177 David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency.*

178 Kalev I. Sepp, *Best Practices in Counterinsurgency,* 9.

179 Kalev I. Sepp, *Best Practices in Counterinsurgency*.

"Modern War: Counter-Insurgency as Malpractice," by Edward Luttwak, provides a harsh critique of modern U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine. The article discusses counterinsurgency warfare in theory, counterinsurgency in practice in Iraq, and an easy way to defeat insurgencies everywhere. One of the specific points is that the U.S. has historically focused on providing basic humanitarian needs that insurgents are incapable of providing.[180] This shows the American assumption that there is only one type of politics: one that focuses on popular support. Luttwak argues that methods harsher than those the United States would consider have been effective in past counterinsurgencies. He discusses several aspects of the U.S. approach in Iraq and Afghanistan that he perceives as inappropriate, but recommendations are not provided. His criticism relies on the availability of technical means for intelligence, a method that does not effectively separate or identify insurgents from among the population.[181] In his conclusions, Luttwak identifies a disparity between America's willingness to start and fight wars based on projected threats and its refusal to govern the conquered space, even for a limited time. He opines that in addition to governing as occupiers, the United States must be willing to employ harsh tactics[182]

In his article, "Notes on Low Intensity Warfare," Luttwak offers additional insight on the U.S. military's organizational structure, identifying the greater military bureaucracy as operating effectively in large-scale, general-warfare scenarios. He believes that future wars will be mostly low-intensity conflicts. The military views these scenarios as a small-scale "real war"; the issue is that logistics, technical equipment, and general military might not be keys to success in irregular warfare. Luttwak lays out a continuum, at one end of which is "attrition-based warfare" and at the other, "relational maneuver-based warfare,"[183] and argues that attrition-focused warfare describes conventional military combat. He observes that conventional forces seek to bring maximal resources and firepower to bear against the enemy as their primary means for

[180] Luttwalk, "Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice," 33–34.

[181] Luttwalk, "Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice," 35–36.

[182] Luttwalk, "Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice."

[183] Luttwalk, "Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice," 13.

success, while those on the relational, maneuver end of the spectrum focus more on the environment, the conflict, and on adapting their processes to defeat the enemy through identified weaknesses. Luttwak suggests that military elements that focus inwardly, striving to optimize efficiencies and minimize risk through material innovation, lose site of the root cause of a conflict. The more ambiguous and complex the conflict, the less appropriate attrition-based organization becomes.[184]

In Jeffrey Record's article "Why the Strong Lose," the ideas of Arreguín-Toft, Andrew Mack, and Gill Merom are examined to establish a baseline argument as to why stronger forces lose in irregular conflicts. In addition to the concepts of superior will, strategic interactions, and willingness to sacrifice, the inclusion of external support to insurgencies is provided as a necessary, but insufficient, condition for insurgent victory. Looking at the American irregular-warfare track record since Vietnam, Record identifies an inability to recognize conflicts as a means to political ends as a fatal flaw, claiming the United States fails to plan for what happens after achieving a military victory and demonstrates an aversion to preparing for counterinsurgency operations. This article is outdated in its reference to counterinsurgency, and focuses predominantly on unilateral, external efforts without referencing advising and assisting operations with host-nation security forces.[185]

Record's analysis seems to appropriately describe the United States' unpreparedness to conduct counterinsurgency operation after their rapid military success in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, he references the critical nature of external support to insurgencies. The implication is that if the counterinsurgent can deny the insurgent critical external support, its chances for success are increased.

In *Going to War With the Allies You Have: Allies Counterinsurgency, and the War on Terrorism,* Daniel Byman draws the conclusion that when supporting counterinsurgency efforts, in many cases the changes required to promote the perception of legitimacy lie with the host government and its security forces. Byman points out that

184 Edward N. Luttwak, "Notes on Low Intensity Warfare," *Parameters 13,* no.4 (1983).

185 Record, "Why the Strong Lose."

reforms may pose a more direct threat to the government than the insurgency, and that it is common practice for host governments to accept the premise of reforms without subsequent follow through. The result is something other than a desired outcome. Further, Byman argues that U.S. support to a host government may make reform less necessary. The empowering of governments by U.S. support may put off land reforms, cleaning up corruption, and other measures perceived as a threatening to the government but effective against the insurgency.

The greater implication of Byman's argument is that there are certain occasions when U.S. support should be conducted from afar, as material or financial support. If the host government does not share the same objectives as the United States, it is unlikely to change its status quo. A call for realistic expectations is required when considering joining a counterinsurgency.[186]

Andrew Mack provides several examples of asymmetrical conflicts that ended poorly for the stronger actor. His argument is that the political and social will to continue military action abroad becomes a decisive factor. Vietnam is offered as the most prominent example, with approximately 500,000 U.S. troops deployed to the region at its height. Beyond survival, the overarching goal of insurgents is to draw the adversary into a protracted war to increase its material costs and erode popular support at home.[187]

In *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response,* Steven Metz and Raymond Millen provide strategic considerations for U.S. support in countries affected by insurgency. They cite a need for understanding the differences between national insurgencies and liberation insurgencies, suggesting that that something similar to the "Powell doctrine" would help decide whether to commit support.

In national insurgencies, governance and security forces exist, and in these cases legitimacy and capacity of the government and security forces are important. However, if

186 Daniel Byman, *Going to War with the Allies You Have: Allies, Counterinsurgency, and the War on Terrorism* (Collingdale, PA: Diane Publishing, 2005).

187 Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars."

the host government does not share critical values with the United States, the ability to influence reform in either institution is limited. Without reform, success in this type of insurgency is unlikely. In revolution insurgencies, the movement arises out of a failed state and in response to an occupying power or newly formed government. In these cases, governments and militaries may not exist. As result, occupying powers must perform quasi-governmental functions until newly formed institutions are capable of assuming these roles. This admittedly nearly impossible task includes building new institutions without their being perceived as illegitimate proxies of the occupying power. If they are so perceived, they will not succeed, regardless of money, time, and material invested. Metz and Mullen suggest the United States consider a policy of containing insurgencies, as opposed to attempting outright victory.[188]

In *Attacking Insurgent Space: Sanctuary Denial and Border Interdiction*, Joseph Celeski outlines the role of sanctuary in a triad of counterinsurgency warfare options (the others being time and will). Citing recent instances in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Syria, Celeski describes the benefits associated with sanctuary, which refers to built-up basing in rural areas. Much of the discussion excludes rugged terrain, social sanctuaries and urban areas. Prescriptions for attacking a physical sanctuary and borders are provided, emphasizing diplomatic pressure on the country of origin and host-country indigenous operations to disrupt sanctuaries. Celeski concludes that the complete destruction of sanctuary is not required. Counterinsurgents can "succeed by disrupting or denying sanctuary and free border transit."[189]

In *Indigenous Forces and Sanctuary Denial: Enduring Counterinsurgency Imperatives,* Robert Cassidy asserts that sanctuary and external support are requisite for insurgent success and conversely, counterinsurgents most often must deny sanctuary and associated support to succeed. "If American led coalitions cannot deny or eliminate the sanctuaries of the global insurgent network and its supporters, we will not prevail in the

188 Millen, Metz, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency 21st Century.*

189 Celeski, *Attacking Insurgent Space.*

conflict."[190] The article references doctrine in the most recent counterinsurgency manual, which in numerous places discusses the importance of denying both internal and external sanctuary and support. The article focuses heavily on U.S. actions rather than host-country responsibilities.[191]

B. LITERATURE BASED ON SPECIFIC CASES

In Chris Mason's *Strategic Lessons Unlearned from Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan: Why the Afghan National Security Forces Will not Hold, and the Implications for the U.S. Army in Afghanistan*, the inevitability of insurgent victory in Afghanistan is asserted. Mason's analysis ranges from the tactical to the national strategic level, characterizing the Vietnamese, Iraqi, and Afghan conflicts, comparing security-force numbers to insurgent numbers, and analyzing in detail why failure is inevitable. Mason predicts what Afghanistan will look like from 2015–2019 and covers lessons learned in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, concluding with recommendations. He expends considerable effort in arguing that Afghanistan has never been a nation or had a national identity, further explaining that police and security forces lack the ability and motivation to contest a committed insurgency. Afghanistan is essentially in a civil war in Mason's estimate, with the implication that a majority consensus on legitimacy does not exist. He devotes considerable time in outlining where government legitimacy comes from, as discussed in Chapter I. In his conclusions, Mason explains the impossibility of nation building, outlines the challenges of state building, and claims peacekeeping is possible, but that coercive peace creation in a failed state is impossible.[192] He argues that there are situations in which desirable outcomes are impossible, regardless of the strategy or time available.[193]

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[190] Robert M. Cassidy, "Indigenous Forces and Sanctuary Denial: Enduring Counterinsurgency Imperatives," *Small Wars Journal* 2 (February 2008): 3.

[191] Cassidy, "Indigenous Forces and Sanctuary Denial," 1–18.

[192] "For the purposes of this book, however, nation-building simply refers to the evolutionary process of creating and establishing a broad, deep, and pervasive personal sense of national identity in a great majority of the population, rather than one that is centered in a localized identity" 147; "State-building refers to building or reinforcing the institutions of civil society." 188.

[193] Mason, *Strategic Lessons Unlearned Vietnam Iraq*.

In Rothstein's "Less is More: The Problematic Future of Irregular Warfare in an Era of Collapsing States," the argument is made that the level of energy and attention the U.S. government focuses on a specific low-intensity conflict is inversely proportional to the effectiveness of that effort. Case studies in El Salvador, the Philippines, and Afghanistan are cited to substantiate this argument. An explanation of the American model of warfare is provided to demonstrate the consistent use of overwhelming numbers of soldiers and technologies. Rothstein articulates why small units of special-operations forces (SOF) are effective, if given the latitude necessary to focus limited resources toward winning irregular conflicts.[194]

In his 2001 article "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," Ivan Arreguín-Toft critiques Andrew Mack's relative-resolve theory and compares it with his own strategic-interaction theory. Strategic-interaction theory holds there are two strategic approaches to conflict: direct and indirect. The direct approach focuses on destroying an opponent's ability to fight, while the indirect focuses on its will to fight. By examining the correlates of war data, Arreguín-Toft identifies that over time, stronger actors lose to the weak at an increasing rate of occurrence. Arreguín-Toft finds that the data supports three hypothesis in asymmetric conflict: that "strong actors are more likely to lose opposite approach interactions"; "opposite approach interaction last longer"; and "opposite approach interactions have increased in their occurrence in proportion to strong actor losses in asymmetric conflict."[195] Using Vietnam to test his strategic-interaction theory, Arreguín-Toft offers two requirements for the United States to fight and win asymmetric conflicts—a well-informed domestic population that understands the conflict will be long and the employment of armed forces equipped and experienced in counterinsurgency. If an ill-suited force is used, implying a poor strategy, a disaffected minority will become the disaffected majority.[196]

In a 2013 RAND study titled *Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies*, Christopher Paul, et al. analyze 71 cases from 1944–2010. The study seeks

194 Rothstein, *Less is More: Problematic Future*, 275–294.

195 Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars*, 112.

196 Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars*, 93–128.

to provide best approaches for a successful counterinsurgency outcome. The analysis identifies three concepts present in all the successful cases examined: "tangible support reduction," "commitment and motivation," and "flexibility and adaptability of the COIN strategy."[197] None of the losing cases contains all three concepts.

Basic truths from the study are offered as recommendations for future success as previously identified in Chapter I. Additionally, the study suggests that the modern classification of enemy-centric or population-centric counterinsurgency strategy overly generalizes the strategy and fails to provide significant insight for future participants in irregular warfare conflicts.[198] In this study, addressing insurgent support was closely correlated with counterinsurgent success, suggesting that denying sanctuary and material support is more important than gaining popular support in some instances.

In *How Insurgencies End,* Ben Connable and Martin Libicki analyze which conditions bring insurgencies to a conclusion. By recognizing indicators, leaders can select strategies that bring about "tipping points" in their favor. Chapter 3, in particular, addresses the effects of conflict duration and external factors such as insurgent sanctuary, outside intervention/external government support, and external insurgent support, examining how they affect the results of an insurgency. Using multiple cases to articulate each external factor, the study provides quantitative results for cases containing the external factors given, along with their correlation to the end result. The authors are careful to distinguish between correlation and causation. Although the study includes both qualitative and quantitative analysis, the results determine only the correlation of factors as they contribute to outcomes.

The study does not outline paths to victory, but it does review basic truths inherent to irregular warfare, including durable insurgency/counterinsurgency resolutions as necessarily based on social, economic, and political justice. To end an insurgency, the government must address the root causes of discontent. Ultimately, "favorable endings

197 Paul, et al., *Paths to Victory: Lessons Insurgencies,* 181–182.

198 Paul, et al., *Paths to Victory: Lessons Insurgencies*.

are produced from well-timed, aggressive, fully resourced, population centric campaigns that address the root-cause of the insurgency."[199]

In an edited compilation by John Arquilla and Hy Rothstein, "Afghan Endgames," different scholars characterize legitimacy in several ways. The first focuses on the level of acceptance a government has from its population, noting it is not required to be democratic to be legitimate.[200] The second, offered by Russell Muirhead, states a legitimate government is a "stable state that enjoys the voluntary support from most of the social groups that constitute the population."[201] By this description, legitimacy resides on a scale and is not necessarily measured in absolutes terms like "illegitimate."[202] Finally, Rob Reilly looks more toward an abstract meaning that indicates the justness of one's cause, drawing a correlation between legitimacy and righteousness, invoking a moral component.[203]

In *Afghan Endgames, Understanding the Afghan Challenge,* Arquilla and Rothstein observe that the United States still considers Afghanistan a critical location in preventing Al Qaeda resurgence, and claim a revised strategy is appropriate. Having clearly defined policy objectives from the outset of a conflict is desirable; however, many of these decisions are made with incomplete information and once made, become more difficult to adjust inside the American political realm. The authors propose that a range of acceptable outcomes be considered to allow greater flexibility in developing strategy. A centrality continuum is provided as a model for balancing desired outcomes with actions that portray a government as legitimate in their cultural context. In the case of Afghanistan, people respect the decentralized nature of governance, relying predominantly on religious and tribal leadership for political and social functions. The push for democratic reforms designed around a strong central government ran counter to

199 Connable, Libicki, *How Insurgencies End.*

200 Rothstein, Arquilla, *Afghan Endgames: Strategy and Policy,* 8.

201 Muirhead, "The Ethics of Exit: Moral Obligation in the Afghan Endgame," in *Afghan Endgames Strategy and Policy Choices for America's Longest War,* eds. John Arquilla and Hy Rothstein (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 164.

202 Muirhead, "The Ethics of Exit," 164.

203 Reilly, *Shaping Strategic Communications,* 170.

Afghan notions of a proper political arrangement. The desired outcome the United States pushed for—a strong central government—is widely viewed by the population as illegitimate. The assumption is that, at the outset, increased common ground between the newly formed government and the United States concerning political objectives and desired outcomes would have brought the GIRoA greater legitimacy and a greater opportunity to create stability.[204]

204 Rothstein, Arquilla, "Understanding the Afghan Challenge," 169–191.

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